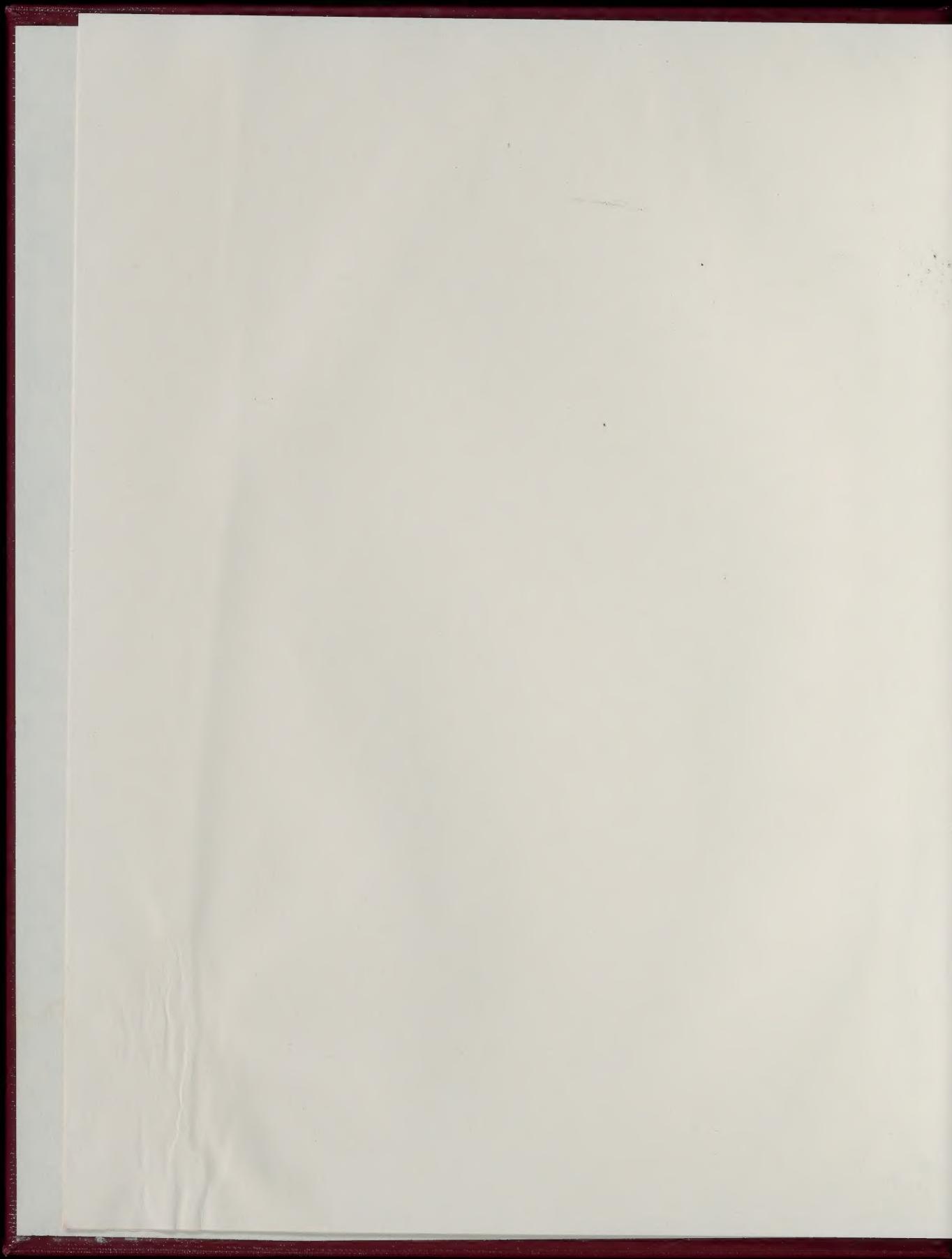


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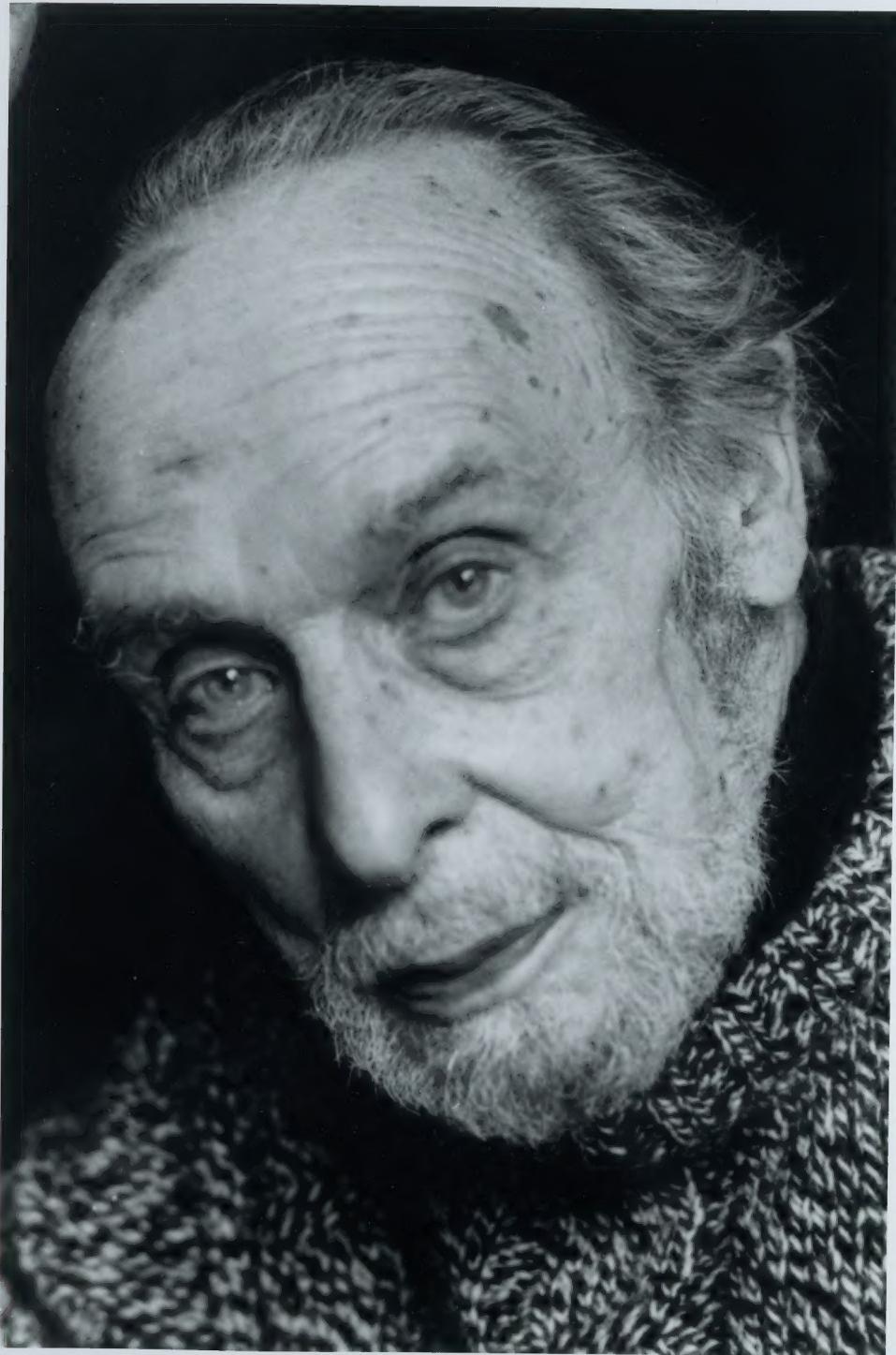












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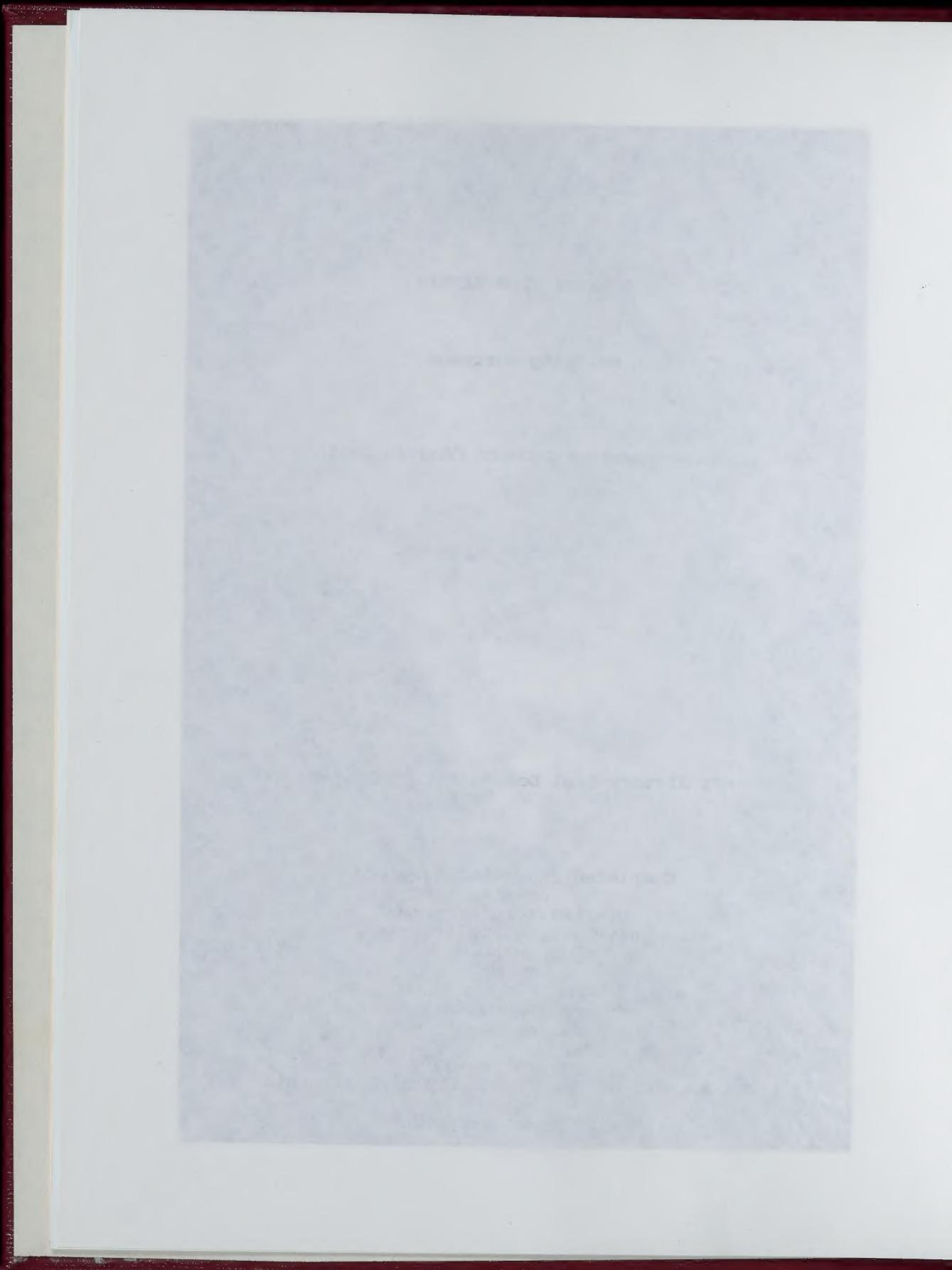
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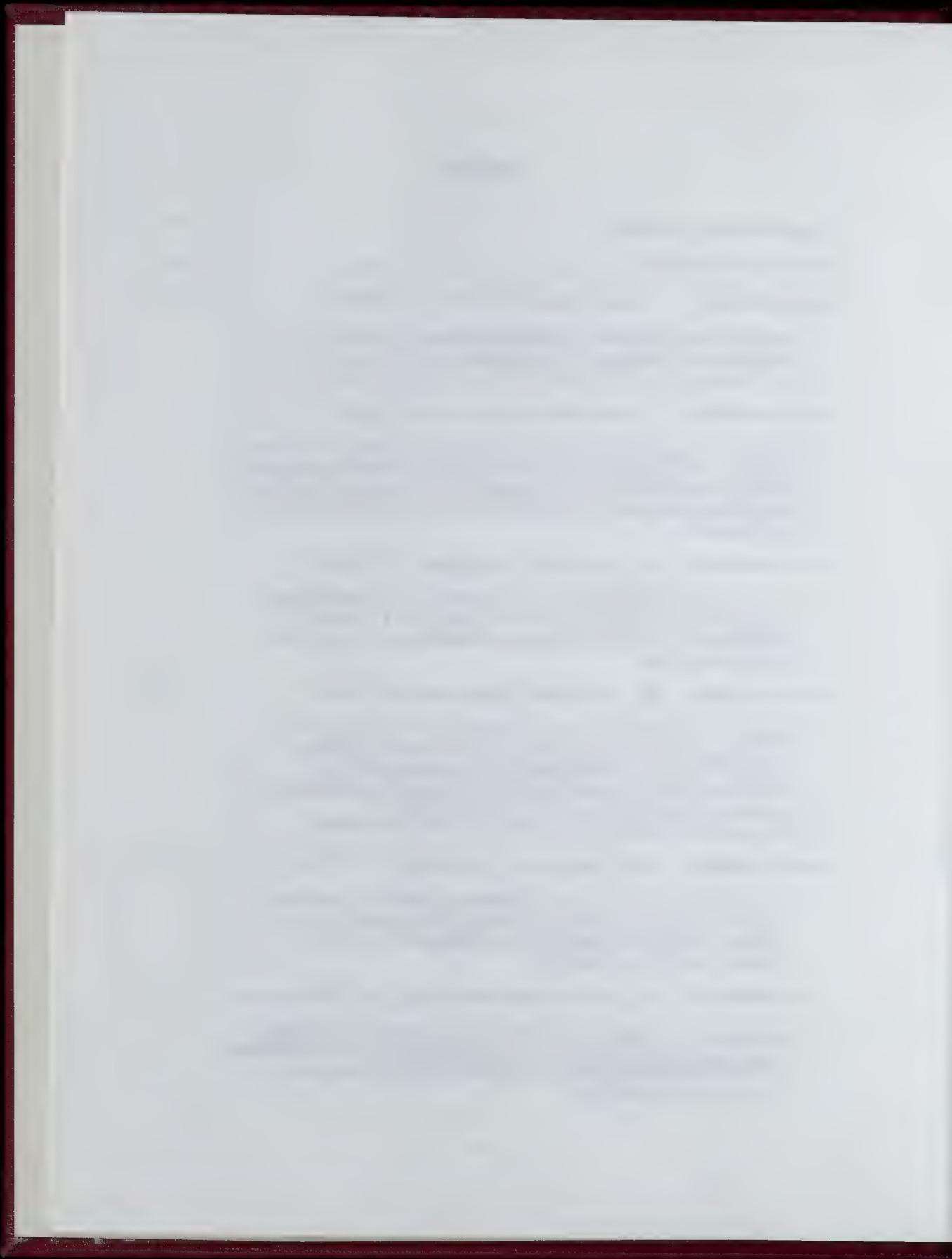
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## CONTENTS

Biographical Summary.....	vii
Interview History.....	ix
TAPE NUMBER: I, Side One (February 5, 1990).....	1
Family background--Childhood home in Berlin-- Education--Father's involvement with negotiations at Versailles at conclusion of World War I.	
TAPE NUMBER: I, Side Two (February 5, 1990).....	15
Military service in World War I--Leaves the army-- Attends the University of Freiburg--Studies with Adolph Goldschmidt at Humboldt University Berlin-- Studies with Heinrich Wölfflin at the University of Munich.	
TAPE NUMBER: II, Side One (February 7, 1990).....	32
Herrmann's dissertation on baroque monasteries-- Influence of Wilhelm Pinder and Paul Frankl-- Herrmann's lack of Jewish identity as a youth-- Anti-Semitism.	
TAPE NUMBER: II, Side Two (February 7, 1990).....	50
More on Herrmann's dissertation--Studying in Leipzig with Wilhelm Pinder--Pinder's later affiliation with Nazism--The concept of a distinctively German art--Work in the Staatliche Kunstbibliothek and the Staatliches Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin--The Escorial.	
TAPE NUMBER: III, Side One (February 9, 1990).....	68
Meets Ernst Cassirer--Teachers and colleagues-- More on working at the Kunstabibliothek--Kurt Glaser--Marries Anni Marx--Exposure to Josef Albers and the Bauhaus.	
TAPE NUMBER: III, Side Two (February 9, 1990).....	87
Artistic movements in Weimar Germany-- <u>Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts</u> --The concept of structural honesty--Contact with Nikolaus Pevsner--Jugendstil.	



TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side One (February 12, 1990).....106

Begins work on a book on Berlin--More on the Bauhaus--Writing for Kunst and Künstler--Children, Barbara Herrmann Weinberger and Frank Herrmann--Evaluation of German architects of the Weimar period--Symbolic architecture.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side Two (February 12, 1990).....123

More on Deutsche Baukunst--Fired from the Kunstabibliothek in 1933--Decision to settle in England--Reasons for abandoning art history--Helping other German refugees--Business activities in England.

TAPE NUMBER: V, Side One (September 13, 1990).....141

English architecture--British reception of German-Jewish émigrés--Life during World War II--Studies classical Greek culture and history.

TAPE NUMBER: V, Side Two (September 13, 1990).....156

More on Greek classical studies--Pension from Germany enables him to quit the zip-fastener business in early 1950s--Returns to art history--Article on Desgodets--Studies Laugier--Rudolf Wittkower--Anthony Blunt.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side One (September 13, 1990).....173

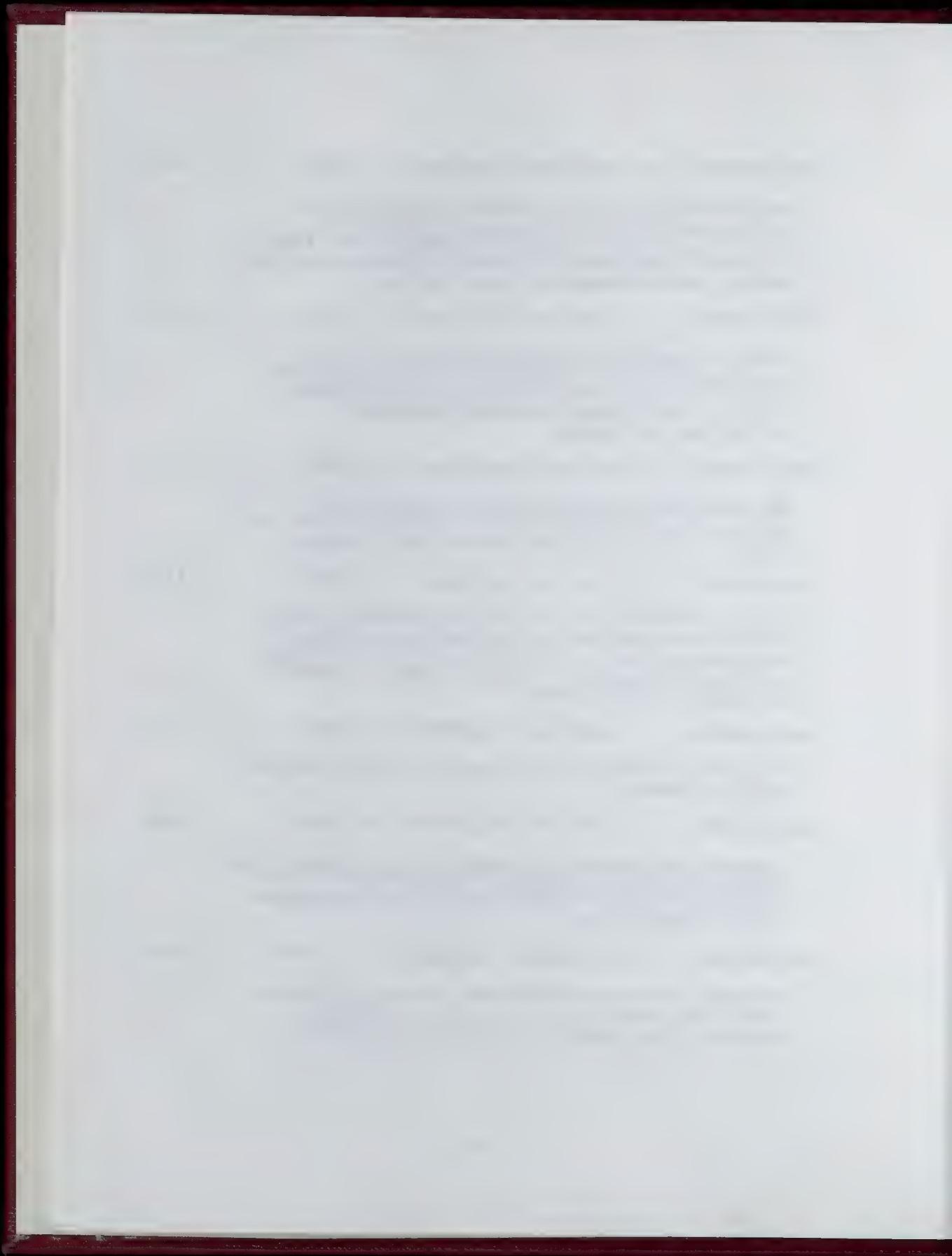
Relations in Germany--Article on Ledoux--Laugier and the modern.

TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side Two (September 13, 1990).....189

Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory--The Theory of Claude Perrault--Begins research on Gottfried Semper--Anthony Blunt's contributions to the Laugier book.

TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side One (September 13, 1990).....206

Studying Semper--Publication history of Semper books--Herrmann's status as an independent scholar--The theoretical basis of his work.



TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side Two (September 13, 1990).....	223
The process of testing hypotheses through research.	
TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (September 14, 1990).....	225
Historical method--More on Rudolf Wittkower--The Freud family--Decision to focus on theory.	
TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side Two (September 14, 1990).....	240
Herrmann's library--More on his studies of classical Greek history.	
Index.....	248



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

### PERSONAL HISTORY:

**Born:** August 17, 1899, Berlin.

**Education:** Engineering, Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Berlin; Philosophy and Art History, University of Freiburg; Art History, Humboldt University Berlin; Art History, University of Munich; Ph.D., Art History, University of Leipzig.

**Spouse:** Anni Marx Herrmann, married 1927, two children.

### CAREER HISTORY:

Assistant, Staatliches Kunstmuseum Berlin, 1925-27.

Keeper of prints and drawings, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Berlin, 1927-33.

Business and manufacturing entrepreneur, London, 1933-c. 1950.

Independent scholar, London, c. 1950-present.

### AFFILIATIONS:

British Society of Architectural Historians.

### AWARDS AND HONORS:

Honorary doctor of science, Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Zürich, 1982.

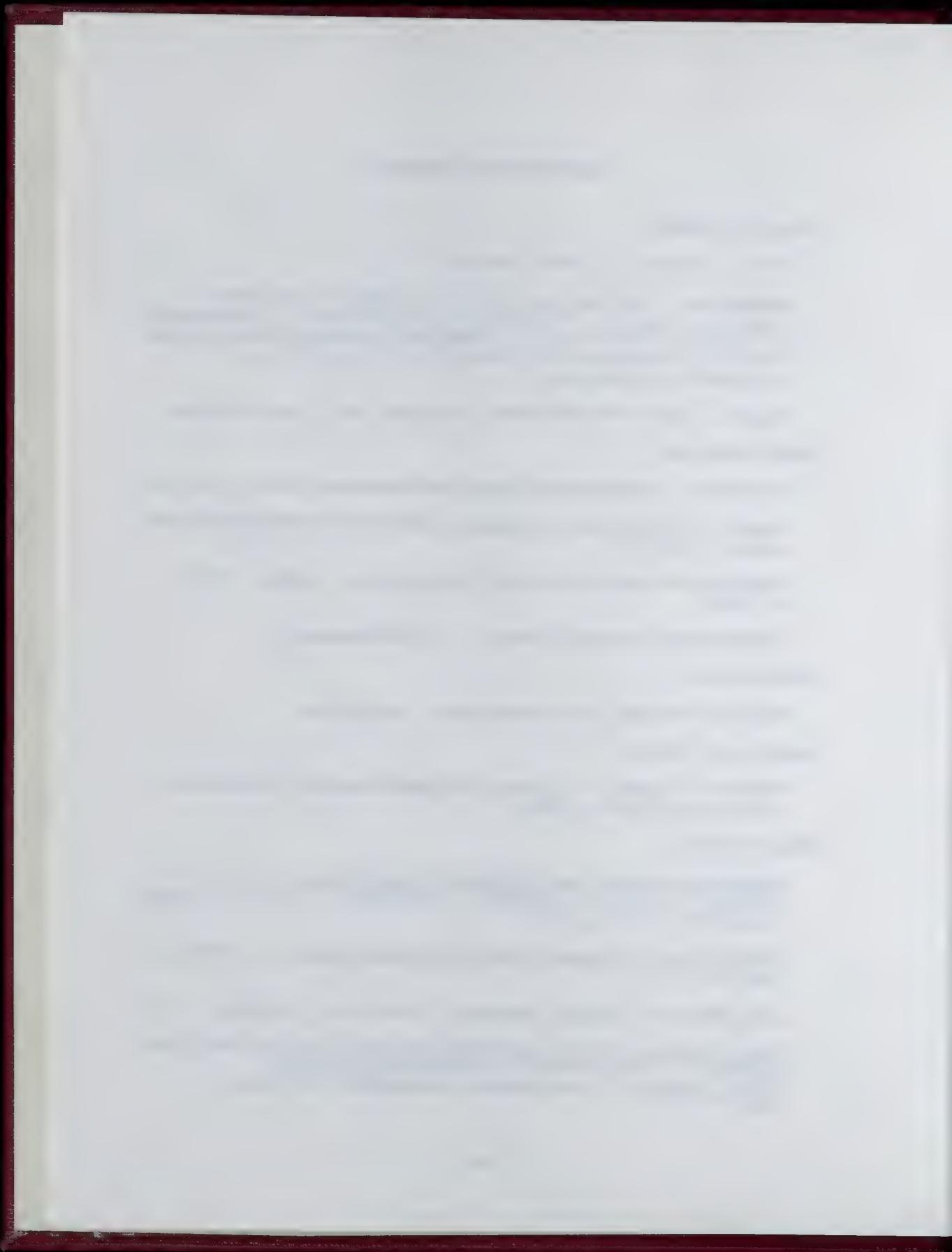
### PUBLICATIONS:

Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts. Vol. 1. Breslau: Jedermanns Bücherei, 1932; Vols. 1 and 2. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1977.

Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory. London: A. Zwemmer, 1962.

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Gottfried Semper im Exil. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1978.

Gottfried Semper: Theoretischer Nachlass an der ETH.  
Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1981.

Gottfried Semper in Search of Architecture. Cambridge,  
Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984.

In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on  
Architectural Style. Santa Monica, California: Getty  
Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992.



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER:

Richard Cândida Smith, Principal Editor, Oral History Program. B.A., Theater Arts, University of California, Los Angeles; M.A., C.Phil., United States History, University of California, Los Angeles.

### TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Tapes I-IV, Herrmann's office, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanites, Santa Monica, California; Tapes V-VIII, Herrmann's home, London, England.

Dates, length of sessions: February 5, 1990 (90 minutes); February 7, 1990 (89); February 9, 1990 (89); February 12, 1990 (90); September 13, 1990 (229); September 14, 1990 (62).

Total number of recorded hours: 10.8

Persons present during interview: Herrmann and Smith.

### CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This is the first in a series of interviews under the joint auspices of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and the UCLA Oral History Program to examine the development of art history as a professional discipline. The Center and the Program asked Herrmann to participate during a visit to Santa Monica in conjunction with preparation of his book In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on Architectural Style.

Smith prepared for the interview by reviewing correspondence and manuscripts in the Wolfgang Herrmann papers in the Special Collections, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanites. He also reviewed Herrmann's writings, including Herrmann's dissertation, articles, and his books. Smith conducted background research on Herrmann's teachers and colleagues.

The interview is organized chronologically. Principal topics and individuals discussed included intellectual and cultural life in Germany prior to 1933, the German educational system, Heinrich Wölfflin, Wilhelm Pinder,



the varied responses of intellectuals to Nazism, Herrmann's decision to leave Germany, the German exile community in London, Herrmann's relation to British intellectual and cultural life, Rudolf Wittkower, and Anthony Blunt. In addition, the interview contains in-depth discussions of Herrmann's writings, with particular emphasis on his decision to concentrate on architectural theory.

EDITING:

Lisa White, editorial assistant, and Vimala Jayanti, editor, edited the interview. They checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Herrmann reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made minor corrections and additions.

Teresa Barnett, senior editor, prepared the table of contents and biographical summary. The interviewer compiled the index and prepared the interview history.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.



TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 5, 1990

SMITH: We usually start off by asking the simplest question, which is where and when were you born?

HERRMANN: We start again from the old story?

SMITH: From the old story, yes.

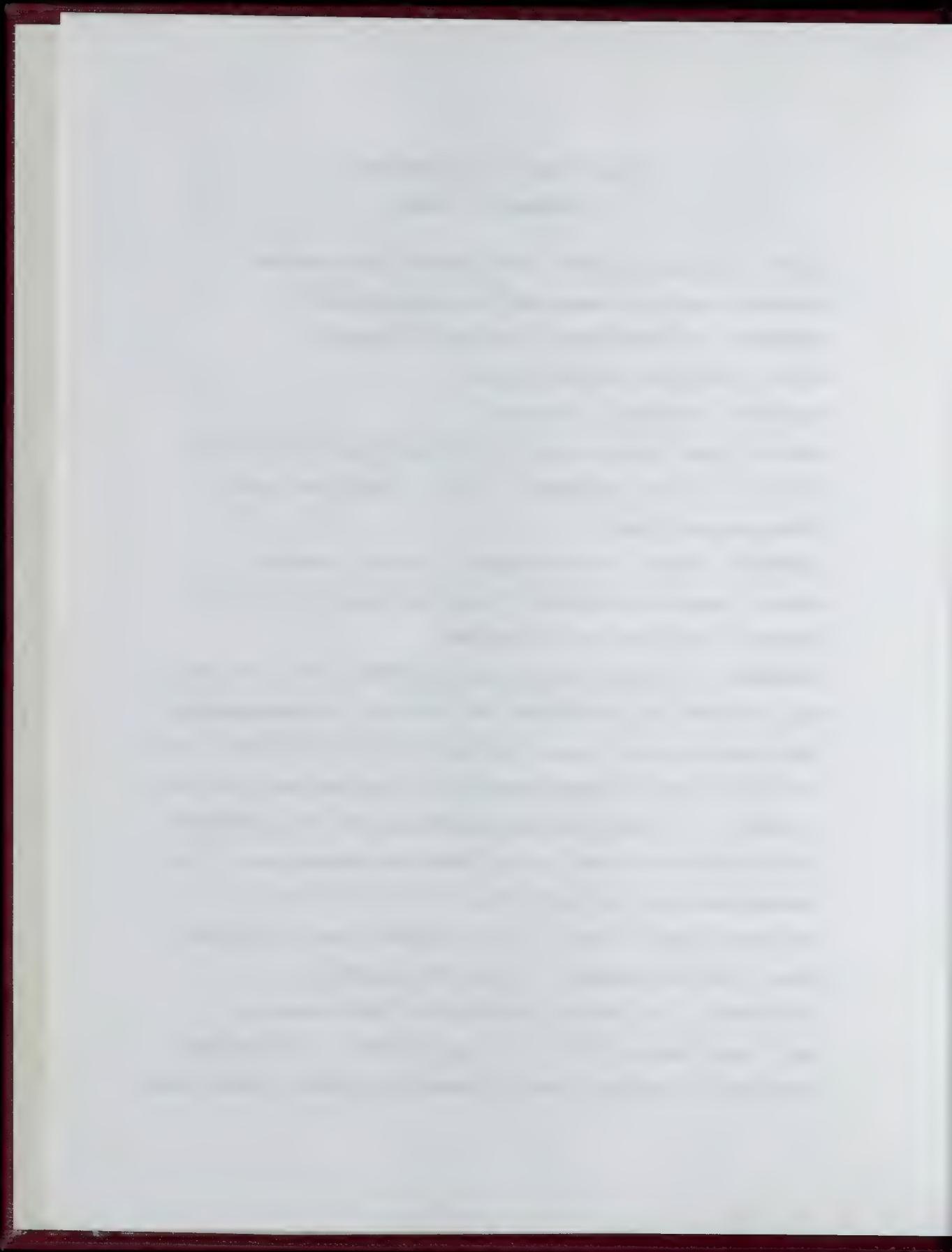
HERRMANN: Because I told you.

SMITH: Right, but you didn't tell the tape recorder. And this will be more expanded. I'll be asking you more detailed questions.

HERRMANN: Born I was on August 17, 1899, in Berlin.

SMITH: Could you tell me a little bit about your parents? What did your father do?

HERRMANN: My father was a timber merchant. He took over the firm that my grandfather had started. My grandfather died comparatively young. He died a few years before I was born and before my father married. My mother was also born in Berlin. I never knew my grandfather nor my grandmother from my mother's side. I only knew the grandmothers. My father--although he really didn't want to go into the business--took it over. It was at that time, in difficult times, that he managed to bring the business up flourishing. It was all through his life successful. I don't know whether that is of any interest. His business consisted in buying timber in Russia and Poland, which then



belonged to Russia. He dealt with the Russian administration in [what was] then Petrograd, or [Saint] Petersburg. So he spoke Russian. He learned Russian.

SMITH: What was your father's name?

HERRMANN: Richard Herrmann.

SMITH: And your mother's name?

HERRMANN: Anna Kirstein [Herrmann].

SMITH: Kirstein?

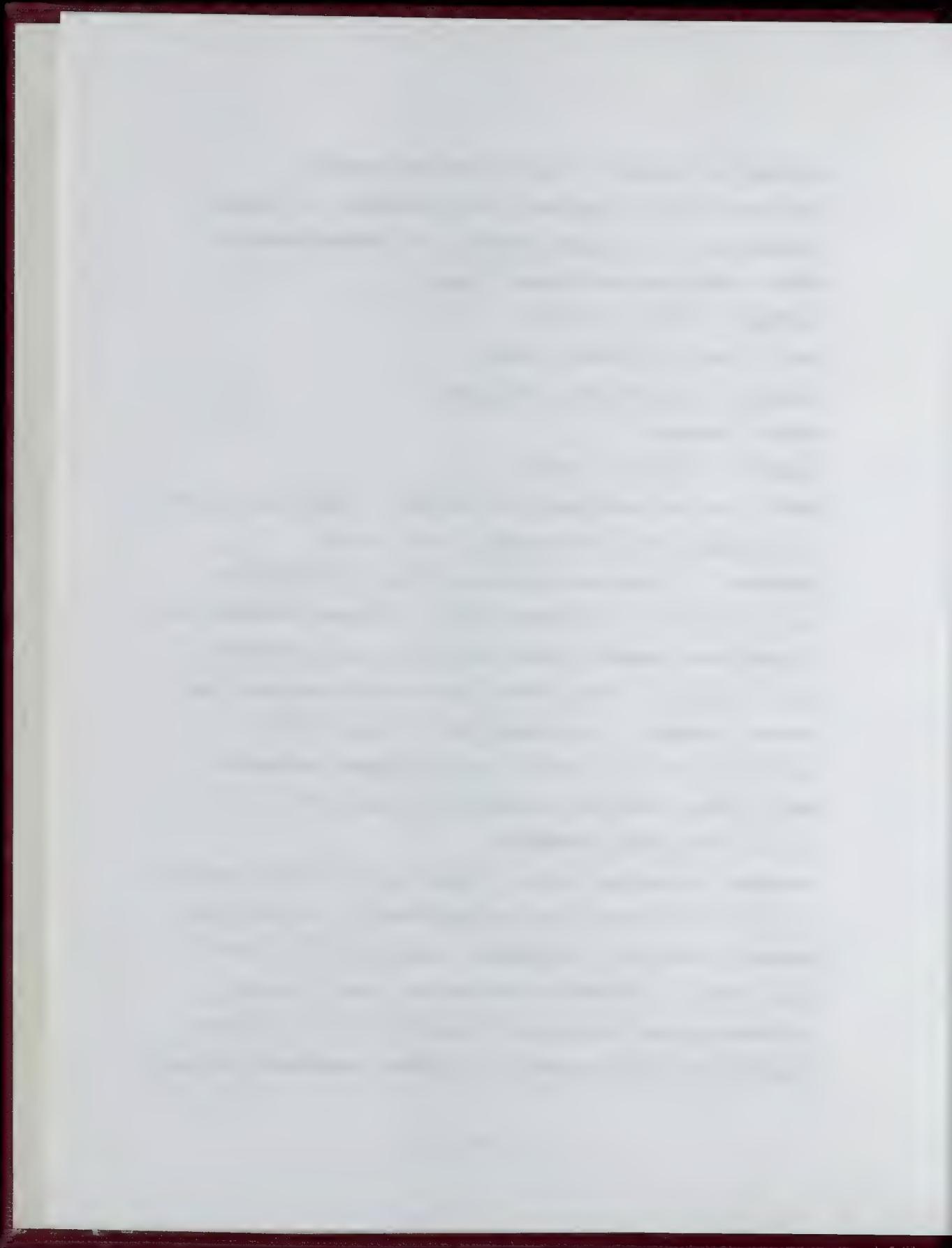
HERRMANN: Kirstein, yeah.

SMITH: You had mentioned that he didn't really want to be in business. What did he really want to do?

HERRMANN: I think he was interested in literature and history, but in a very general way. He never studied. So it must have happened rather early that my grandfather died. He had an elder brother who studied chemistry and became a chemist. So it was a sort of resignation, or sacrifice. But as I said to you, he became successful.

SMITH: What about the background of your mother's family? Were they merchants?

HERRMANN: My mother's family came from the Polish part of Prussia, from a small town called Schwerin, but not the Schwerin which is in Schleswig, somewhere in the north. Then later, I finished my studies and, yes, I asked [Wilhelm] Pinder to give me a reference or two. Pinder suggested he will recommend me to [Max] Sauerland, who was



then director of the Hamburg Museum. Pinder wrote a letter, which I then later saw. It was typical of Pinder that he said who I am and that my family comes from Schwerin--which was the quiet, normal, northern, well-known part of Germany--and didn't say that I was Jewish and came from quite a different Schwerin. And Sauerland was later, I think, a full-fledged Nazi.

SMITH: Did your family have a strong Jewish identity?

HERRMANN: No. No. None at all, my father not at all. And my father's family--I don't really know where they came from--had little Jewish connection, except perhaps my grandmother. Whereas my mother's family, there the ties were much stronger. She as a girl went back to Schwerin, a little Prussian-Polish town with a strong Jewish people. And her grandmother and probably grandfather were more consciously Jews. My mother wasn't, but still she knew where she belonged.

SMITH: Did you attend temple? Did you attend the Jewish synagogue?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: You had no religious education?

HERRMANN: Jewish? Nothing. Not at all. I remember as a young man of seventeen, eighteen, the synagogue in the Fasanenstrasse--which later, then, was burned down--was open. It was quite a magnificent building, and I was



interested to see it. And one Saturday morning, I suppose, I went in. At that time it was quite normal to wear a hat. I went in and took my hat off. That was my natural habit. And that was a horror to the people there. Just to tell you how close my--

SMITH: Did you have any brothers and sisters? Or do you have any brothers and sisters?

HERRMANN: Yeah, I have one older sister [Ilse Herrmann Kaden], who is now ninety-three. She is still alive. And then I had-- When I was six my mother had twins, a boy [Klaus Herrmann] and a girl [Ruth Herrmann]. I was almost seven years older, so I treated them as my property, as my children. And they looked up to me. I was sort of their father. My brother Klaus just died last year in New York, where he had lived since 1936. My sister had a more exciting life. Does it interest you?

SMITH: Yeah. Actually, I was going to ask you what kind of careers your brother and sister had.

HERRMANN: Ruth was a very shy person, basically, and then, overcame that and became politically interested. By '32, she was a member of the Communist Party and did underground work. So she was quite committed. Soon after Hitler came to power she fled, first to Paris, and then--like many members of the intelligentsia--to Sanary in southern France. There she met Friedrich Wolf.



SMITH: The name doesn't ring a bell.

HERRMANN: Is that of interest to you?

SMITH: Yes, it is. Yes.

HERRMANN: The life story of my sister is at least as interesting as my little history. But why it interests you, I don't know. So she met Friedrich Wolf. Friedrich Wolf was a medical doctor, but at that time was well known as the author of many successful plays with a strong political content, foremost among them a drama, Cyancali (1929), in which he openly attacked the paragraph 218 of the German criminal code that made abortion a criminal offence. His arrest two years later on charges of performing indiscriminately abortions and his subsequent acquittal made him famous. So my sister lived with Friedrich Wolf. She became pregnant with a girl. That was just when Vichy France came under Nazi rule. So she had to leave. With the newborn baby, she managed to get across the Spanish border into Portugal and on a boat sailing for Cuba. During her stay in Cuba she worked, together with other members, on transmitting news to Germany. In '44 or '45 she obtained, through various connections, a visa to Soviet Russia. A Russian boat brought her and her child via San Francisco to Vladivostok. From there she traveled to Moscow, but soon went to Berlin and Dresden, and there she lived for the rest of her life, working as a



librarian. She died a few years ago.

SMITH: In the--

HERRMANN: In Berlin.

SMITH: East Berlin?

HERRMANN: East Berlin. Actually, she lived in Dresden, but her daughter lived in Berlin. And when she became very ill, she moved to Berlin and died there.

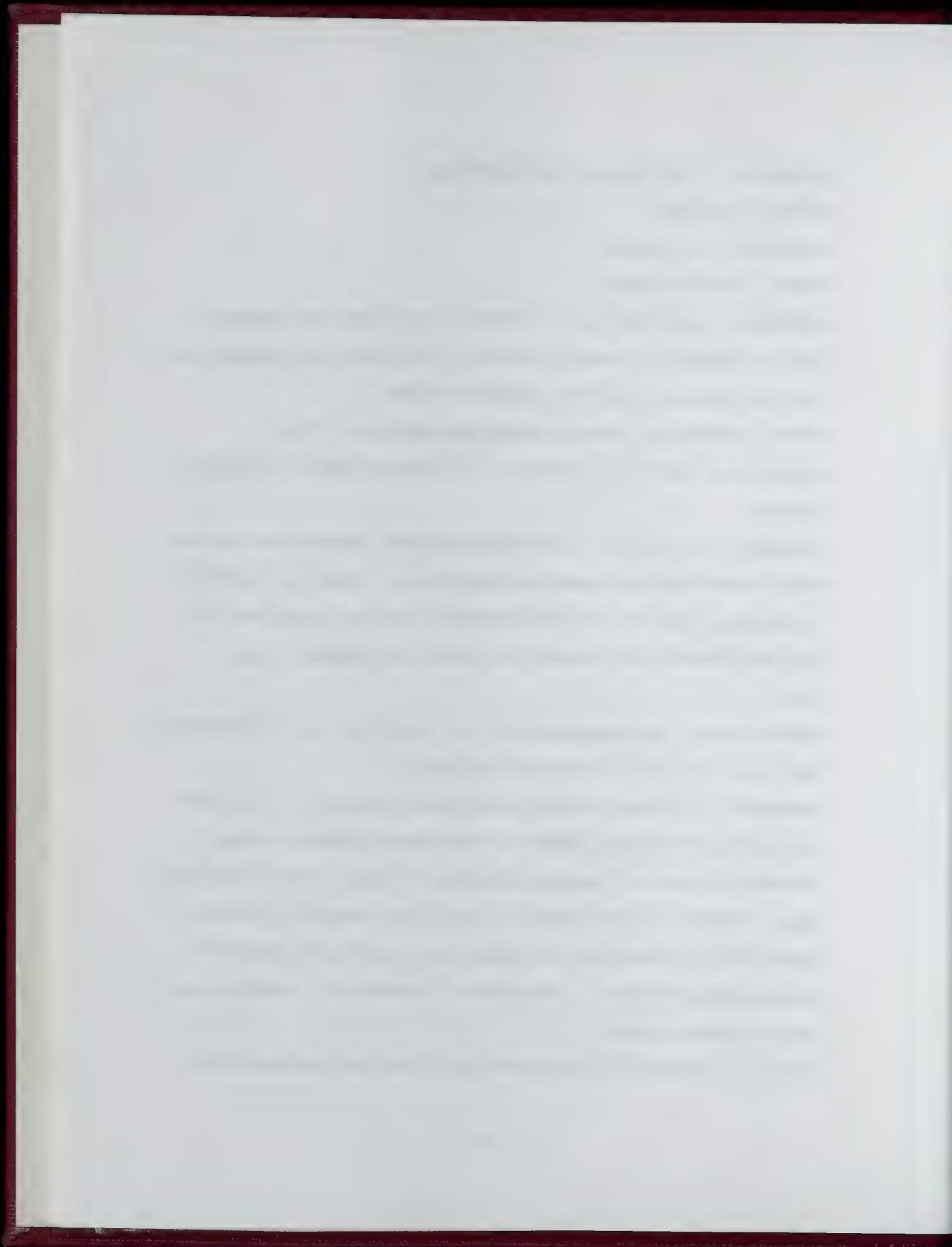
SMITH: Actually, that is very interesting. The connections which-- I think we'll discuss that a little bit further.

HERRMANN: As far as I am concerned the connections we had were those with my sister and my niece. When we traveled to Germany, we went to West Berlin, too, but our real aim was East Berlin and Dresden to visit my sister and my niece.

SMITH: Well, getting back to the Berlin of your childhood, what part of Berlin did you live in?

HERRMANN: I lived in what's now West Berlin. I was born in the Keithstrasse, which is in a part of Berlin that featured in one of Theodor Fontane's novels written at that time. There I lived until [I was] six, when my parents moved into a house further west near the Kurfürstendamm. Lietzenburgerstrasse. And there I lived till I left-- No, until I went to war.

SMITH: I think it's interesting to ask an architectural



historian what kind of a house they lived in as a child and if that house had any significance.

HERRMANN: The house my father then bought [on Lietzenburgerstrasse] was owned by Peter Kruse, who as a timber merchant was known to my father. Kruse had built it in the 1880s when this area had not been developed. By the time my parents moved in, many apartment houses lined the street and Kruse's house, set within a large garden, was unique in this street of ordinary apartment houses. Kruse was an original. I remember him telling of the day when a friend of his who was a painter took him in a sailing boat out at sea. Halfway through his painting, the painter got seasick, but Kruse did not. He looked at the painting and the brushes and thought it wasn't so difficult, and finished the painting. And that made him a kind of a painter.

When he came to Berlin, he built a castle-like red brick villa, the Lietzenburg. It [was a] neo-Gothic, romantic, crazy building. He may have already divided it into several apartments, or my father did that. So it was the ground floor and the first floor, where we lived. Then there was an enormous studio, and this eventually was let to a sculptor. Then there were two more apartments. We had the garden, and the main room on the ground floor was our dining room; it led straight into the garden. Kruse



had clad the whole dining room in dark oak panels, also Gothic/renaissance of about 1880. He had a witty inscription in Low German cut in these panels. My father left this, but otherwise everything was painted. Kruse had painted it, but my father covered that up except for one recess that led into a wine cellar. And on that recess Adam and Eve were painted, holding grapes that framed the door to the wine cellar.

SMITH: So the walls were painted with frescoes?

HERRMANN: Frescoes. Yeah.

SMITH: All throughout the apartment?

HERRMANN: No. Only that room. Then there were-- It was an unusual house. There was a kitchen, and then the doorkeeper had an apartment. And then in 19-- [tape recorder off]

SMITH: Well, at any rate, that sounds like that's a very interesting house. The sort of house that would have made [Nikolaus] Pevsner ill.

HERRMANN: It made Pevsner--?

SMITH: No, the sort of house that Pevsner would have disliked very much.

HERRMANN: Oh, yes. Actually, it was a terrible house, if you think back. But it was unique there in that street, and it was called the Lietzenburg. I don't know whether the street was called after the house or the other way



round.

SMITH: You were quite close to the Kudamm then? The center of town. To the Kurfürstendamm?

HERRMANN: It was very close; it was one block away.

SMITH: So did you spend a lot of time--?

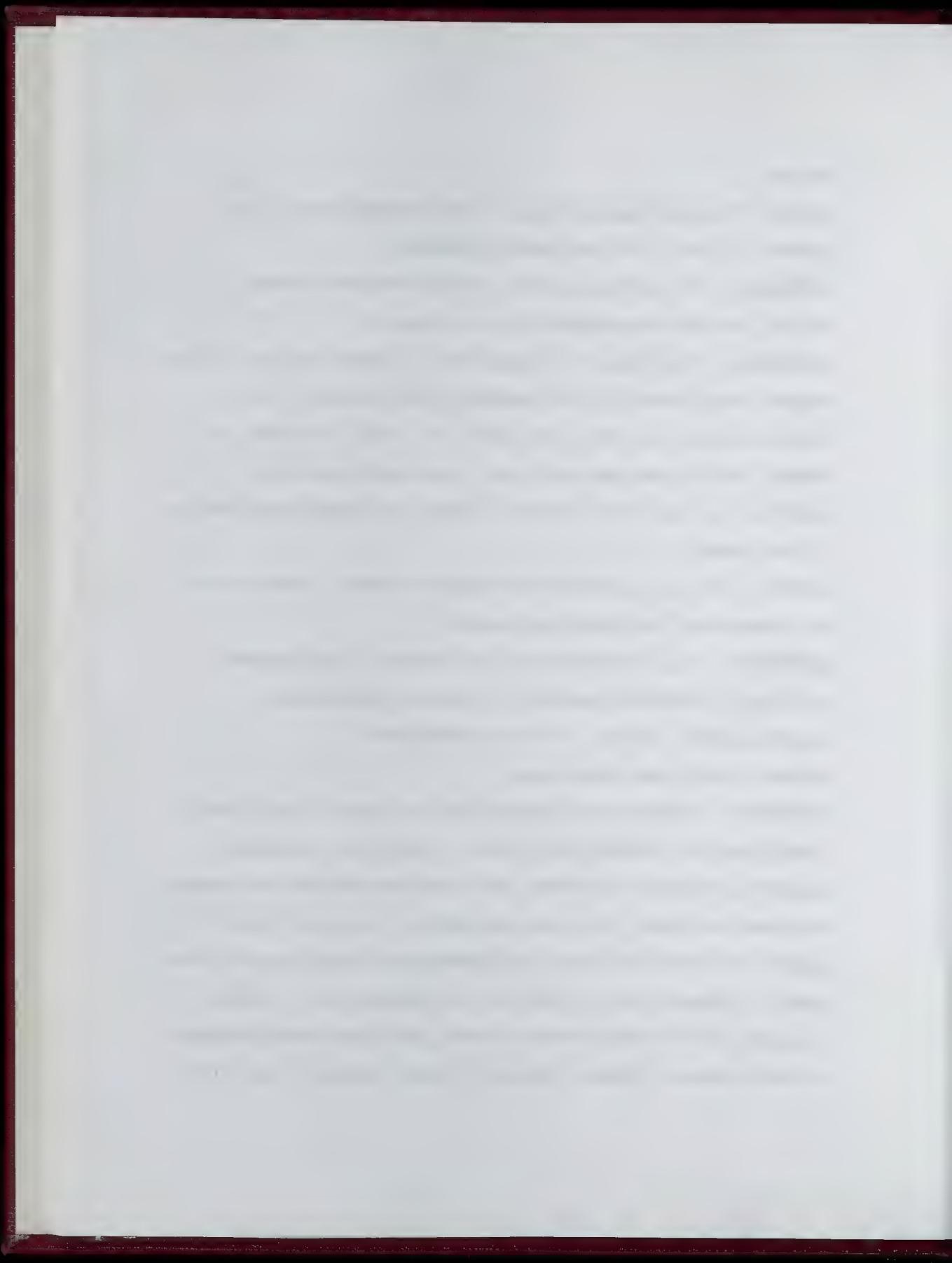
HERRMANN: Yes, yes, as a young man, I spent quite-- It was normal to go there in the evening with friends. The Kurfürstendamm at that time was a bit like il Corso in [Rome] Italy, and may still be. Not quite such an institution, but still it was a habit to walk there and sit in the cafes.

SMITH: Did your parents have much interest in the arts? In literature, in painting, music?

HERRMANN: Yes, my mother was an artist. She learned painting. She had lessons by a fairly well-known impressionist artist. I forget the name.

SMITH: We'll get that later.

HERRMANN: And another teacher was Dora Hitz, but I don't think she is, or was, well known. My mother probably wanted to become a painter, but then she married my father and had children. But she did paint. One vivid memory is when I was four or five-- My sister was older, eight. She went to school, but I didn't go to school yet. My twin [brother and sister] weren't born, so I was alone with my mother, which I liked. Which I liked because I was also



free of the domineering influence of my older sister. I had to stand up to her, which wasn't so easy. And my mother started to paint me sitting on the floor playing with bricks. She made a painting. To induce me to sit there and sit still and not run away, I got, in the end, raw egg with sugar. Raw egg with sugar beaten up, some drink. That was the bait for me to sit. But that is a memory of my youth. And that painting is still about. She always did some painting.

My father was interested in art, but not in music. He also later collected paintings, collected the impressionists. Not the top ones, but--

SMITH: French or German?

HERRMANN: French impressionists. Oh, there were also German, [Max] Pechstein. So not impressionist, but expressionist.

SMITH: As I recall, at that time the emperor, and many of the people involved in official arts policies, considered impressionism to be an alien painting style. Alien to German.

HERRMANN: You mean there was an official art or--?

SMITH: In the [Royal] Academy [of Arts], right.

HERRMANN: No, the-- Well, more than-- And then my parents married in '96 and then started to furnish their home. It was in German Renaissance style, something like it. Some



pieces survived. That would mean that in '96 this was their taste. But to assume this would be not quite fair. It is quite possible that this German Renaissance furniture came from my grandparents or was given to them by friends as wedding presents. They had already then some Jugendstil pieces. By 1910, with the growing family and the business flourishing, my father decided to enlarge the apartment. That was quite exciting for me because I could watch the builders erecting the new floor and walls. Most of the furnishing was changed then. It wasn't Jugendstil but was in quite good taste, and in these surroundings I grew up.

I think I told you already that it was normal for children to have music lessons. So my sister learned the piano and tortured my parents with her practicing. So when I came into that age, they decided never again. I wanted to, but I never had.

SMITH: You had mentioned that you were enrolled in a Realgymnasium.

HERRMANN: I went first to a Vorschule, then to a humanistic Gymnasium--I think only the first class, which is the sexta. Then we moved, and I went to a different school. And from there to a Realgymnasium, and that was then my training as a--

SMITH: What languages did you study in the Realgymnasium?

HERRMANN: Oh, apart from Latin, English. French too, but



more English than French. Although, it didn't help me very much when I came to England. But what I enjoyed was history, really.

SMITH: Was it your choice or your parents for you to have a modern education instead of a classical?

HERRMANN: I'm not quite sure about that. I think I must have had a say that I did not want to go to a humanistic-- I think so. The first change made an impression on me. I came from a very strict to-- This Realgymnasium was freer, but I think the main reason was that it was a modern building and was a new school. And the whole atmosphere was more relaxed.

SMITH: Your parents sound like they were fairly forward-thinking for the Germany of their time.

HERRMANN: Yeah, they were more progressive. I told you, I think, they were democratic progressive. My father was politically interested. And then things became more exciting--that is, after the war, in the twenties. I forget now the dates. The first independent act of Germany after the armistice was the negotiations in Versailles, where they talked about reparation payments. And the government needed experts, for every commodity was part of the reparation. Germany had to deliver this, that, or the other to the Allies, and one section was timber. So the government appointed my father, as an expert, to deal with



the negotiations in Versailles. It must have been several weeks, and I remember that he told me about it. It was in Versailles, in the park, but the whole German delegation was under guard. They couldn't get out into Versailles or into Paris. But my grandmother, my father's mother, was enormously proud that my father was sent to Versailles.

SMITH: How was your father's business affected by the Russian Revolution?

HERRMANN: I can tell you about that, too, and stop me if it doesn't interest you. My father's business was affected in 1905, not by the Russian Revolution, but by the Russian-Japanese War.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: Affected in an amusing way. If you'd like I'll tell you, and you cut it out then.

SMITH: Sure.

HERRMANN: It was normal for him to go every year and take part in a competition for-- No, it's not competition. To submit his tender for sleepers for the Russian railway. And submitting these tenders to the minister, it was normal to hand over also an envelope with some money in it. Because of the money and the good quality of the sleepers, the tender was accepted. The 1905 Japanese war and the defeat brought in a sort of democratic government, and altogether there was a wave against corruption. So my



father, in 1905, came again and then was told that-- Oh, he tried to give him the envelope, and the man said, "No, Mr. Herrmann, I don't take any more. I'm clean." So the next year my father came to the man, but he said he doesn't take any--



TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 5, 1990

SMITH: Okay, your father said--

HERRMANN: He wanted to leave the room, went to the door, opened the door, and then the minister said, "Oh, Mr. Herrmann. I take again." [laughter] So that was the story. The revolution, the war itself, affected him. Germany occupied, in 1916 to '17 I think, the greater part of the Ukraine. Of course, my father spoke Russian and was in the business, so he was there doing business. That stopped. And, of course, that must have upset him. But my recollection is it can't have affected him financially. In 1921 to '22, not so long after the war, '20 to '21, I started to study. And I had an allowance, a comparatively nice allowance, at a time when other students had a hard time. So he can't have been affected very much.

SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about World War I and your recollections.

HERRMANN: World War I?

SMITH: World War I, yes.

HERRMANN: My experience in World War I.

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: I thought I told you before.

SMITH: Right, but--

HERRMANN: I was called up at seventeen. Then I was sent



the furthest away from Berlin I possibly could be sent away, to Königsberg. And there I stayed at my basic training for a year, I think. Then the age limit was lifted and I could be sent to the front. So in 1918, in August 1918, I was sent to the war. I came to Sedan [France]. And there we were distributed to various regiments. I got into a cart to take me to the regiment. And I had a gas mask, and the first thing I did to it, I left my gas mask. So I went into the war, first of all, without a gas mask. Somehow I must have got it back. Well, then, that was September. It was only September, October, November--the beginning of November--two months. But, of course, in memory it's a long, long time. I had a lot of experience.

SMITH: Was it very intense fighting?

HERRMANN: I was in the artillery, so we were behind the lines. In that way I was lucky. But our advance posts were closer to the line. In the beginning, I had to bring food every day to these advance posts. Marching through the French landscapes was quite pleasant. But then I also got-- At that time--it must have been October--the front line of the enemy was strengthened. The Americans came in and broke through, and even the artillery was in the fighting line. There I experienced fighting and killing. Not pleasant. I mean-- But eventually armistice-- I was



waiting. Actually, from the time I came armistice was in the air, the last two or three months.

SMITH: Did the soldiers you were with in the German army feel that Germany had lost the war?

HERRMANN: They were completely demoralized. We were young, and for me it was my first experience of war. But there were people who had been called up and went to the war at the beginning of the war, 1914. And at that time, they may have been almost forty, or even over forty. These were old men for me, and they were fed up with the war. Whenever we moved into a new position, these old men--old men!--warriors, were so knowledgeable that they looked around at how the position was, where the ground is, where it goes down. Not where the front was, but how easy it was to escape. That was their main purpose. They were militarily completely demoralized. Then there were young people. I was an ordinary soldier, an ordinary private, but there were some officer aspirants who very quickly would have advanced. And when armistice came, or when it was near, and even after it came, they suddenly moved up to become officers. I knew quite a number of them who were on the same level as I was up to that point. And then they changed completely and were ripe for-- I didn't realize it then, but they were ripe for fascism even then.

SMITH: Did they join the Freikorps?



HERRMANN: Yes. Some joined the Freikorps and from there, of course, gradually joined the Nazis.

SMITH: I was going to ask you, in Berlin, before you joined the army, what did you and your friends feel about the war? I mean, of course it started out with a very patriotic burst, but by 1916 to '17, what were you and your friends saying about it?

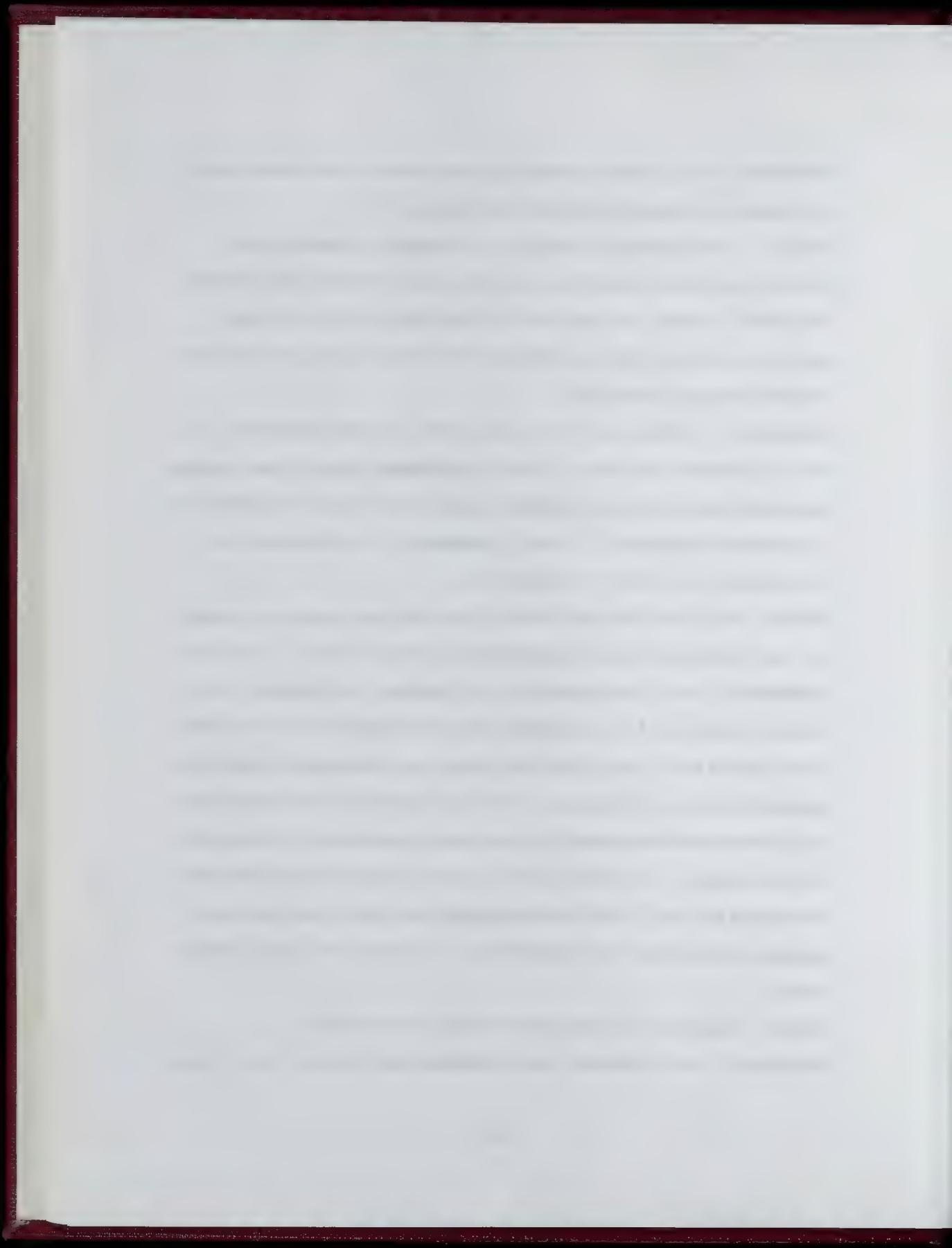
HERRMANN: I think by '17 I knew that it was hopeless. It was a question of time. I don't remember that I had heated conversations with my friends about it or that they were of a different opinion. I don't remember. In the army in Königsberg, we didn't discuss it.

SMITH: Did the American entry into the war have an impact on the German civilian population in April 1917? Upon you?

HERRMANN: Yes. The question, of course, of whether the Wilson plan would be accepted or not accepted was the most vital question. Being at the front, we discussed what the prospects were, of course. At that section--that was near the Ardennes--the enemy's lines were completely taken over by Americans. So there was-- I don't think there was any hostile feeling. But what happened at that time and how people reacted to the revolution, I'm sorry to say I don't know.

SMITH: How did you feel about the revolution?

HERRMANN: As a release, as a liberating thing. But I was

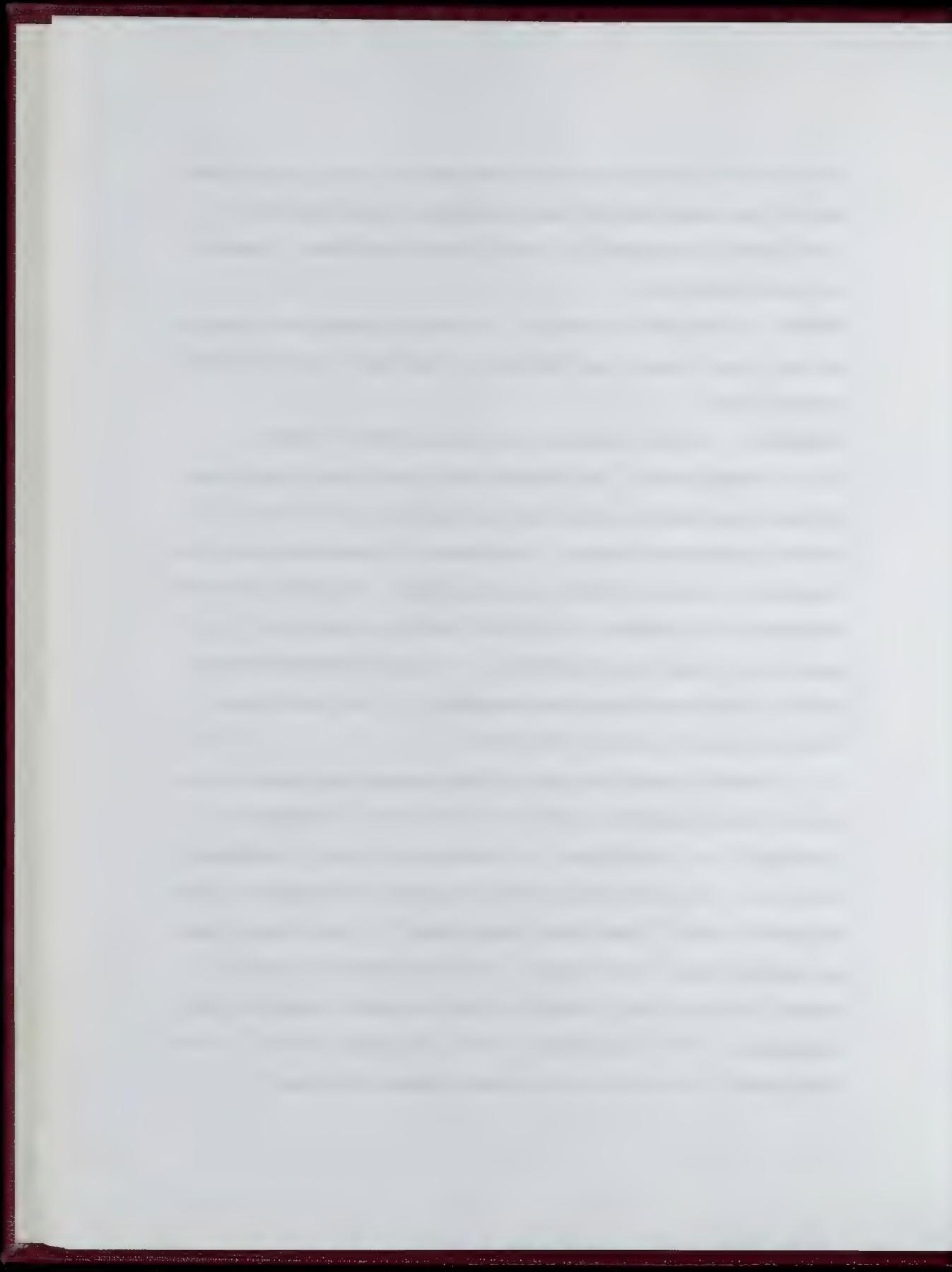


so involved personally in the war and so forth, and to get out of the army and get home and start my professional life, that I welcomed it. But I can't say more. There's not more than that.

SMITH: It was just a relief. It was a change of-- How did you get back home after the end of the war? How were you demobilized?

HERRMANN: In that regiment or company that I was in, people disappeared. We walked back from French territory through Luxembourg, which was an experience, to see a country untouched by war. The whole of Luxembourg was like a garden. We walked back, several days. It must have been November 9 to December 10 or 15. By that time, we eventually came near Frankfurt. We were stationed there. And all the time people had enough of it and went home. That was shortly before Christmas.

I think I told you that I then phoned my parents--the first time I could do that--and told them, "I think of leaving." As I told you, my father would say, "Goodness sake, no. You must stay and be properly discharged." And my mother said, "Come home, come home." I only heard that my mother said, "Come home." The same night I told a friend of mine that I would go and he should leave my bed untouched. "If I am lucky, I will get away; if not, I will come back." I had to walk to the nearest railway



station. It took quite a while. There I went and asked for a ticket, and he said, "Have you got a pass? I can't give you a ticket." So I thought, "I probably won't get away." The train came in. I went outside the ticket station. There was a fence, and I stood there and saw the train come in. And I thought, "Oh, no. I missed the train. I will have to walk back." And while I was leaning against that fence, I suddenly noticed it was a gate and it was open. I walked in, and I got into the train.  
[laughter] And the train went off with me. I went on into the lavatory and thought, "I may be able to get past the controller until Berlin."

But I was caught in Erfurt or Essen or somewhere. He said, "Come with me" and took me to the commanding officer. And he said, "Where did you come from?"

I said, "From the front."

Now, that was so unusual--that must have been December 20--that somebody still came from the war after all that time, and not just going wildly around the country. So he took another view and said, "Where is your regiment?"

"In Königsberg."

"How will you get there?"

I said, "By train via Berlin."

He said, "Okay, here is a ticket to Königsberg, and there you must report."



But it was a train via Berlin, and the train stopped shortly before the station. So I got off the train and didn't need to go through and didn't need to present the tickets and walked out. And there, truly, I was immediately stopped by the Red Guards, who took all the weapons from me, which I gladly gave them. And then I went home.

SMITH: Were you in Berlin during the Spartacist revolt when Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were killed? Were you in Berlin in January of 1919?

HERRMANN: I was in Berlin in January 1919, yeah.

SMITH: During the uprising?

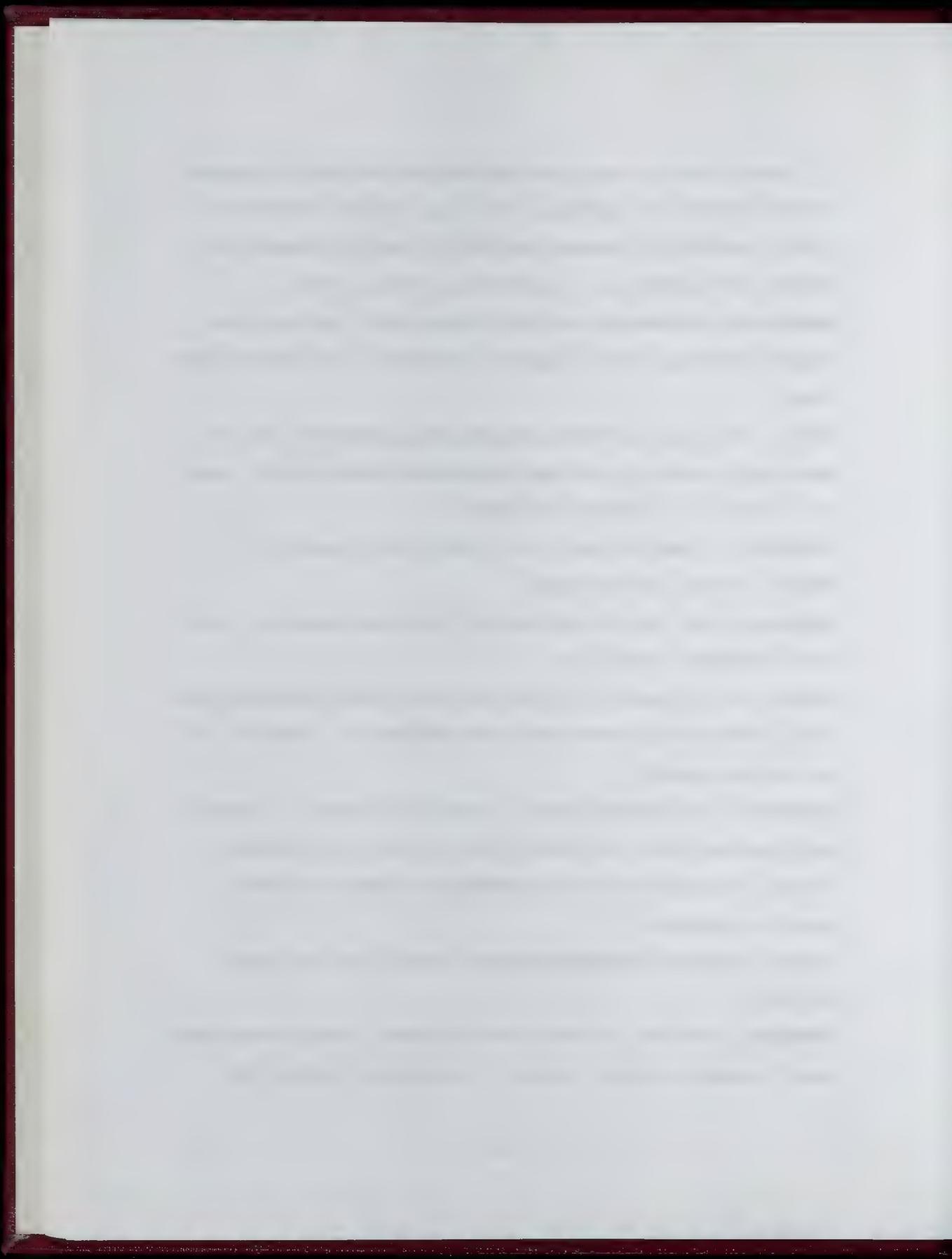
HERRMANN: Oh, yes, I was there. That was upsetting, but I don't remember much of it.

SMITH: Now I guess it's time we should start talking about your professional career and your education. When did you go back to school?

HERRMANN: In January 1919. I was ill at home. I think I had a normal flu. But when I got rid of it, I told my mother, "I want to study engineering at the technical school in Berlin."

SMITH: The ETH [Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Berlin].

HERRMANN: The ETH, which is still there. Many, many years later I gave a lecture there--it was quite strange for



me. And that was-- They started terms for people who came from the war and had missed the right time to apply. So they waived all the conditions for entrance. For older people, too, who may have missed the final school exam. So that was one special term. The lectures were given in a big auditorium, and most students were much older than me. I was more or less the normal age, whereas these may have been in their high twenties or even thirties, coming from the war. And they were not used to any discipline, so it was a rowdy affair, which made studying a bit difficult. But apart from this, it only took me one term to realize that the main subject, mathematics, was not for me. So then I said, "I want to change." I decided then to go to the [University of] Freiburg and study philosophy and art history.

SMITH: Can I ask you why Freiburg?

HERRMANN: I don't know. I don't think it was because Husserl was there. I didn't know anything about this. I think there were certain universities, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Munich, which were attractive. That may have been the reason.

SMITH: Freiburg had a reputation for being the most liberal university in Germany at the time. Do you think that had something to do with it?

HERRMANN: It may have, it may have. But I am not aware



that--

SMITH: So you studied philosophy and art history?

HERRMANN: Well, there I sort of studied philosophy. I worked in a seminar. They asked for an essay on "Was Plato a Mystic?" I was quite proud of that essay. I wrote it down in German, beautiful handwriting. A cousin of mine bound it in leather and I gave it to my parents as a-- I also had art history. [Hans] Jantzen was at that time there.

SMITH: Did you take lectures from Jantzen or seminars?

HERRMANN: I must have taken that philosophical seminar. Lectures. Jantzen was one I remember. There must have been more.

SMITH: What about Walter Friedländer? He was at Freiburg at the time.

HERRMANN: Was he there?

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: Walter F. Friedländer? I met him later. I didn't know that he was there. No, I don't know. The great disadvantage of the German system [was that] when you decided to inscribe yourself, it was up to you what you decided. You got a menu of everything, and if you were very, very eager, then you could subscribe to the whole lot. And nobody cared whether you attended or whether you didn't. Nothing. You had no supervision at all. It was



an impossible system. As soon as you got older, second and third term, and you got into a seminar, then somebody advised you to take only a few, or something. And then in order to pass exams later on, you had to have attendance proof.

SMITH: I see.

HERRMANN: But in the beginning, nothing. Nothing at all. And if you worked at all, it was showing extraordinary interest. I mean, at Freiburg it was very tempting not to work. It was winter, the mountains were close, you could go skiing. And then in the autumn, it must have been the wine. The fresh wine came out, so you had a lovely time.

SMITH: Do you recall the name of the professor for whom you wrote the paper on Plato?

HERRMANN: I don't think it was Heidegger. I don't know. No. There was another professor whose name I can't remember. Later on he became Ordinarius in Heidelberg.

SMITH: Did you take classes from Husserl or Heidegger?

HERRMANN: No, I don't think so. I took a class in phenomenology and didn't understand a word.

SMITH: Now, in terms of art history and Jantzen's approach, do you recall what kind of art history courses you were introduced to at that time? Did you attend lectures that Jantzen gave?



HERRMANN: It must have been seventeenth-, eighteenth-century architecture or paintings. When I started to change to architecture, I'm not quite sure, not in Freiburg. In Freiburg I decided on art history, and then I thought of going to Heidelberg, but did not go. I wonder whether [Friedrich] Gundolph was at Heidelberg at that time. Anyhow, I didn't. I went to the [Humboldt University] Berlin, where I stayed at my parents' home. That was easy. But I don't think that was the reason for my decision. I wanted, then, to study art history properly and wanted to go to [Adolph] Goldschmidt.

SMITH: What was it about Goldschmidt that appealed to you?

HERRMANN: The very exact and systematic and factual method, which I experienced with him. [I was] very grateful to him, but, nevertheless, after a year--or it may have been longer--I thought I had to have a more modern outlook, something which related more to the present factors. So I went away from Goldschmidt, but with assistance and encouragement by Goldschmidt to go to [Heinrich] Wölfflin.

Wölfflin and Goldschmidt-- Wölfflin was in Berlin before and went to [the University of] Munich. And Goldschmidt was in [the University of] Halle and came to Berlin. So I don't know when that took place. I don't know whether you ever heard the story of Goldschmidt being



appointed Ordinarius in Berlin in place of Wölfflin, who went to Munich. He wrote to Wölfflin and said, "I am coming," and Wölfflin went to the station to greet him. Goldschmidt came and said, "You know, I must tell you, in Halle the students were in tears when they heard that I had to leave." And Wölfflin said, "So they were here when they heard that you were coming." [laughter]. And both of them-- I hope it is true, the story. It is certainly true for Wölfflin. Wölfflin could easily say things like that.

SMITH: Actually, both Jantzen and Goldschmidt were medievalists.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: And yet your interest was baroque.

HERRMANN: Quite different. But that had nothing to do [with it]. It was the way he looked at medieval ivories and ivory statues and at the folds and the form of the folds and how you can trace the form of the folds through a whole range of ivory statues. It was a way of looking at things which was diametrically opposed to Wölfflin. And obviously it wasn't meant for me. But it was impressive. It helped me quite a lot, that if necessary I know that that should be done.

SMITH: I understand that Goldschmidt-- One of his methods of teaching in his seminars was to take a single object, usually a medieval reliquary, and he and the students would



spend an entire semester analyzing it, a single work of art. Did you have that kind of a seminar with him?

HERRMANN: I don't remember. Yeah, I had. But I don't know that it was that. He wasn't the only one. There was [Hans] Hildebrandt. I heard Hildebrandt, which also may have influenced me. Hildebrandt was quite different from Goldschmidt. But Goldschmidt had some-- He was a very shy and timid and retiring person. He had some personality, which impressed me.

SMITH: Did you have personal interaction with him as a student?

HERRMANN: Yes. He knew me, and I knew him, of course. He knew me and he took a certain interest in my development. I was not-- I don't think I was in his private life. But in the seminar and the institute, he knew me.

SMITH: I am wondering, in terms of the lectures, if you could-- Did he show slides during his lectures?

HERRMANN: Who?

SMITH: Goldschmidt. Or Hildebrandt, first.

HERRMANN: Oh, yes. They showed slides, yes. Hildebrandt certainly did. No, no, Goldschmidt, too. Hildebrandt I remember particularly because he only gave lectures in his private house. That was a bit difficult to show slides [there], but he did.

SMITH: What were the questions that Goldschmidt or



Hildebrandt would pose to you as students? Not just to you personally, but to the students they were working with.

HERRMANN: Nil. I'm sorry, there is nothing.

SMITH: Well, that's okay. Of course, you were only there for a year, so--

HERRMANN: Yeah, I only stayed a year or a year and a half, and I felt quite part of it.

SMITH: Apart from it?

HERRMANN: And I knew people. If I think hard I may remember even a name, but--

SMITH: Well, [Rudolf] Wittkower studied under Goldschmidt. Was he there at the time?

HERRMANN: Yeah, Wittkower started. All I remember of Wittkower is that he was at the Hildebrandt lectures, and I saw him. He was two years younger than I am. So he was not in the war, and he was a year ahead of me. But I didn't know him, and I didn't meet him, I think, until London.

SMITH: Did you choose your dissertation topic at this point?

HERRMANN: My dissertation, yes.

SMITH: In Berlin you began--

HERRMANN: But I choose that in Munich.

SMITH: In Munich, okay.

HERRMANN: In Munich, probably, it came-- Well, I really



don't know. But it could, of course, have come through Wölfflin's Barock und Klassizismus that I chose baroque, and there were other people. One was [Hans] Rose. And I heard Wölfflin's major lecture, and I took part in his seminar. It may be that to decide on baroque was caused by Wölfflin, but more in opposition to Wölfflin. I mean, "opposition" is perhaps too strong a word. To interpret it more unbiased, or less formally, than Wölfflin. With Wölfflin, it was two forms and his whole outlook was formative. And that, eventually, I didn't follow, and that's why I went to [Wilhelm] Pinder. But the fact that I chose baroque may have come through him. Then there were several people. Rose was one. [Eberhard] Hempel I think another. Rose worked, at the time, probably on Bernini and Bernini's visit to Paris. And Hempel must have worked on baroque, so there was the background. And then I decided on the development of monasteries. I have no recollection that somebody suggested it to me as suitable. But when I went to Pinder, I already knew the theme that I must have told him. And while I was in Munich and Bavaria, I went from one monastery to the other.

SMITH: Let me ask you, was it usual for students to move around from university to university?

HERRMANN: Yeah. Not only usual, but almost unusual if somebody would start and stay to the end. You could, of



course, stay forever. There was no urgent need to take his finals. You could be the eternal student if you wanted to. But the normal thing was to go around. I was not abnormal.

SMITH: So you felt in your year, or year and a half, you got what you needed from Goldschmidt. It was time to move on to another professor, to another Ordinarius that had another perspective.

HERRMANN: Yeah. Oh, yes. That was, I think, quite a good system. I think Pevsner apparently lived in Leipzig all the time. He started with Pinder and stayed with Pinder, as far as I know. So that you could also do-- But it wasn't against you. In England, it is much more difficult. If you would move from one to another, you would have difficulty to find the second or third one. That wasn't so. And then people moved. For instance, if they found it difficult, they went to Würzburg, which was known to be a very easy place to pass your exam. If you said later on you passed in Würzburg, it wasn't so good. That you could do, too. And Würzburg would take you, in any case.

SMITH: You mentioned that Goldschmidt helped direct you towards Wölfflin. But I understand that Goldschmidt was one of the sharpest critics of Wölfflin and his method.

HERRMANN: Yeah.



SMITH: Did Goldschmidt--?

HERRMANN: Yes, but he did not-- That's funny. I'm quite sure that I parted with Goldschmidt and went back to Berlin and saw him again. He did not dissuade me from going to [Wölfflin], which would be the normal thing. And, of course, they were-- I can tell you it didn't happen.

SMITH: How did you get interested in architectural history? How did that particular focus develop for you?

HERRMANN: It must have happened, I think, in Munich. That's where I knew that I was interested. My parents had a silver wedding [anniversary] in 1921. I hope that's right. Because by that time I was in Munich already. I can't make that out, how I did all that: went to the ETH, went to Freiburg, and then to Goldschmidt, and was--

SMITH: Well, it's two and a half years from the beginning of 1919 to--

HERRMANN: Well, if in 1921, then the-- In any case, whenever it was--perhaps it was a bit later--they went to Italy to celebrate their silver wedding and took my sister and myself with them. So I was in Rome, and there I know I was eager in architecture. And baroque architecture.



TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 7, 1990

SMITH: Well, today I thought we'd continue with your work on your dissertation ["Der Hochbarocke Klostertyp"] and in the process discuss [Heinrich] Wölfflin and [Wilhelm] Pinder, what you learned from them or didn't learn from them. You had mentioned just as we were ending last time that you had gone to Italy in 1921 with your parents [Richard Herrmann and Anna Kirstein Herrmann], and in Rome you began to get the idea for working in the baroque. How did that evolve into a decision to do your dissertation on the German monastery, baroque monastery?

HERRMANN: I have no recollection except that in Munich I definitely worked on monasteries. How that evolved, I don't know. The most likely explanation--but it is just an interpretation or assumption, I don't know--is that I was impressed by the layout of high baroque monasteries. It may be that already at that time, I related it to the Escorial and may have started with the Escorial. But I have no recollection of it.

Of course, I think also-- After the interview, one thing came back to me. While I was still in Berlin, possibly through my parents or my father-- My father's brother was married to a woman born Cassirer. It was a well-known Berlin family. And through this, my parents



were befriended with the Cassirers, and so I went and saw Ernst Cassirer. That must have been in the Berlin days. He was a very impressive man--at that age, very. I was a young student just recommended to him, and [he was] very kind and very understanding. He obviously was somebody. So that, I remember. That was-- He may have talked to me about philosophy, I don't remember. A relative of his, a nephew of his, I also met in Berlin for the first time. That was Cassirer the art historian. This morning I knew his--

SMITH: His first name is slipping. For some reason I'm thinking Paul, but--

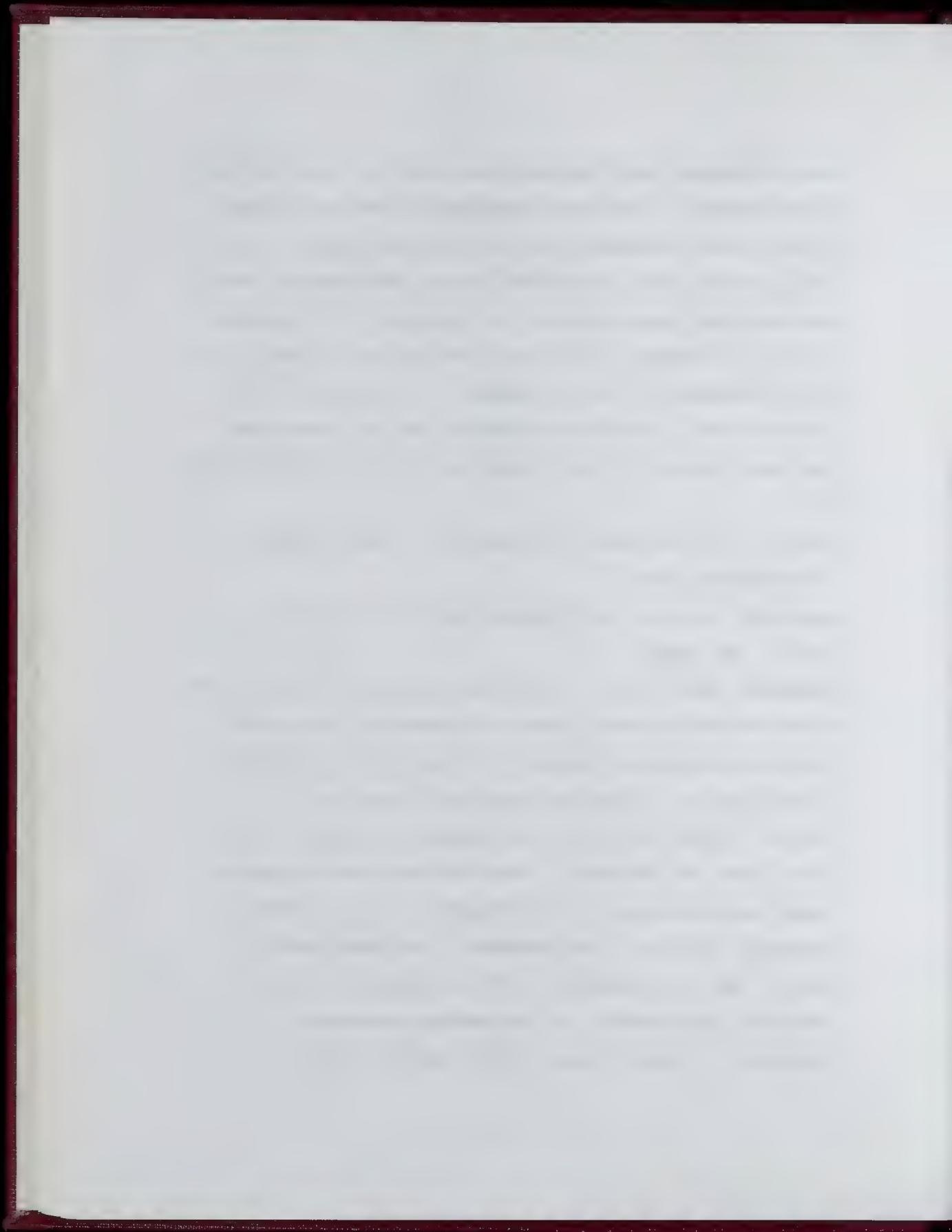
HERRMANN: No, no, Paul Cassirer was the art dealer.

SMITH: Oh, right.

HERRMANN: But he was, at the time, quite well known. He wrote an article about French architecture, to do with French architectural theory. And much later I must have picked that up. I met him then, as a young man in Berlin. I met him when he was probably ten years older than I was, and he also-- I met him from time to time in other circumstances. But he helped me. Kurt! Kurt Cassirer. So that I now remember. You asked what?

SMITH: How your interest in the baroque grew to the interest, specifically, in the German monastery.

HERRMANN: I wish I knew. I know that in Munich I



seriously studied, and I read a book by a Jesuit about Jesuit churches.

SMITH: How much previous work had been done on the German baroque monastery?

HERRMANN: Not generally, like I did. I don't think there was. There were monographs, but not as a building type.

SMITH: Your title also interested me. Just the concept of the type, the Klostertyp. How did you come to focus on a typology? Was that something that was coming from your professors, would you say?

HERRMANN: I don't think so. It's certainly not from Wölfflin. Certainly not. Wölfflin impressed me as a person, Wölfflin impressed me as a lecturer, but certainly did not help me there. There were a number of people, but I don't think-- On the whole, I [inaudible]. I mean it. When I do something-- Even later, when I was doing art history again, I conceived a theme and went into it. In the beginning, I was not concerned about what anybody else said about the subject. I just tried to cover it and get out of it as much as possible. Only when I was more advanced, I may have looked at other people. But my subjects mostly are very confined, in contrast to others, who spread out. It may have an advantage. It has also a disadvantage, because a lot of things escape me.

SMITH: Your subjects in your later books are confined.



Your dissertation and your first book [Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts] are very broad.

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Of course, the Idealtyp is a concept of Max Weber. I believe it originated from him. Was Weber discussed in art history, in the classes? Were his ideas current?

HERRMANN: Well, it didn't affect me.

SMITH: So for you the problem, then, in the dissertation was-- How would you define the problem you chose for yourself in your dissertation?

HERRMANN: It's the development of that type from the beginning in the seventeenth century--where certain early, more developed types occurred--until it was picked up in the eighteenth century to an extraordinary extent. The aesthetically most complete in Austrian baroque monasteries. Melk was one. Then others which were built in a more megalomania Typ and never completed, also in Austria. Starting, really, with the Escorial much earlier and that continuous influence, how it developed, particularly, of course, in the baroque, but particularly in southern Germany and especially in Austria. How it came about. It was a very distinct scene.

SMITH: You note in your conclusion to the dissertation-- and I think you state it also at the beginning, but it is



most clearly stated in the conclusion--that all of German baroque art, you felt, could be understood by studying the German monastery buildings of the period.

HERRMANN: Did I say that? How interesting. Did I say that?

SMITH: Yes, you said that. [laughter] Do you still believe that?

HERRMANN: No. [laughter] No. I forget completely what I have written. And I forget even now what I have written a few months ago. But that I had completely forgotten. Occasionally I had to look at the dissertation; I don't know whether I ever read it again. But other books--like later on, the German architecture [Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts]--I read more recently. And I was amazed about the cheek I had to say statements like this. I must have-- Well, I don't know. I don't remember hardly anything from this.

SMITH: It's a very descriptive work rather than, shall we say, analytic. Of course there is a lot of analysis of the types, but it is very much a--

HERRMANN: Yeah, describing. Yes. I don't know whether you want to go into it, but out of that work-- After I finished it, I wrote an article ["Deutsche und Oesterreichische Raumgestaltung im Barock"] on the difference between Austrian and Italian baroque.



SMITH: And German.

HERRMANN: And German.

SMITH: The article on the Weingarten ["Zur Bau- und Künstlergeschichte von Kloster Weingarten"].

HERRMANN: The Weingarten, gosh. And I think it is German and Italian.

SMITH: German, Italian, Austrian.

HERRMANN: That is more analytical.

SMITH: Yes, very.

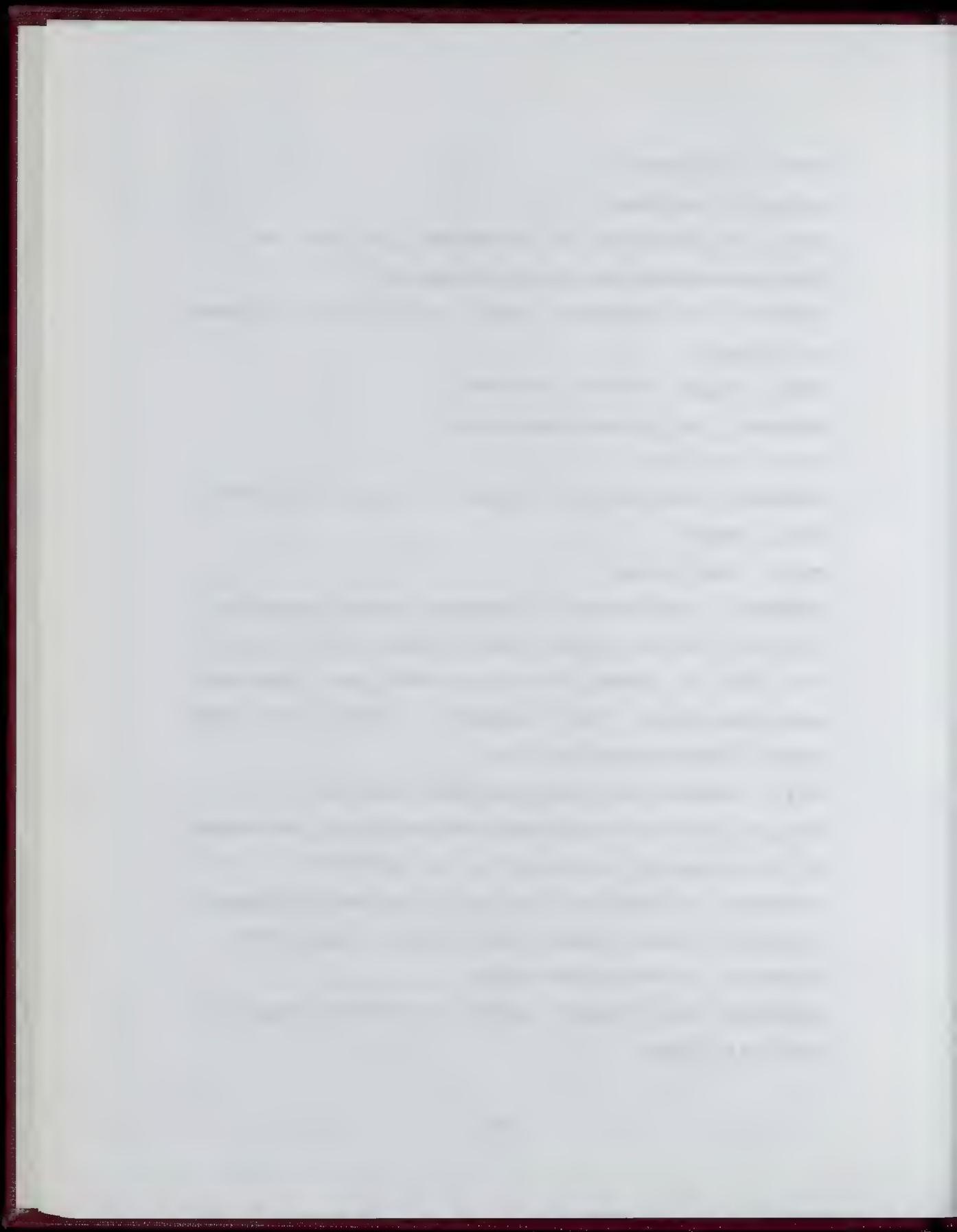
HERRMANN: There was an influence. I'm sure it was from [Paul] Frankl.

SMITH: From Frankl.

HERRMANN: This article, I-- Somebody wanted to publish them now. So that is why I read it again. That's why I know about it. There I talk a lot about space, and that comes from Frankl. That I remember. I read at that time Frankl's book and saw him also.

SMITH: Maybe we will talk more about that article, but also get more into the dissertation and how it was shaped by the process of writing it for your professors. I was wondering, you know, how your use of the term Hochbarock relates to Pinder's eight-fold-- He had an eight-fold chronology of the baroque style.

HERRMANN: Well, Pinder's system of separating people by their birth date.



SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: That was a great influence on me, too. I mean, this was a very productive attitude. Maybe one can overdo it, but that was new and that was something I got from him.

SMITH: So the generation problem was something that was very meaningful to you.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: Did you find in your study evidence of what Pinder argued? That the generational styles would be--how to phrase this?--in different phases in different countries or different parts of Germany? For instance, the North German artists may be working in a different generational cycle than Austria.

HERRMANN: No, I didn't. That I don't think so. No. Otherwise, it had an influence on me, and I accepted it and used it. Also later in architecture, modern architecture. I think that was something Pinder brought that was new at that time, this attitude and was very much different from Wölfflin's attitude.

SMITH: How would you summarize the difference between Pinder's attitude and Wölfflin's attitude on that question?

HERRMANN: I think Wölfflin looked at art separate from life. It was formal art. Either it was baroque or it was classical or it was Renaissance. There were certain forms. The relation to the times and the influence of the



times on the artists and on the form development, he didn't touch I think. Whereas Pinder was much closer to it. Anyhow, that was-- I don't know if I expressed it sensibly, but that was the reason why I went to Pinder and away from Wölfflin. Apart from the fact that Pinder worked on baroque at that time.

SMITH: So for you Pinder's approach was more rooted in the problems that the individual artists confronted as they developed?

HERRMANN: In what moved the artist and the problems of the time and then the age of the artist, at what age the problems of the time affected the artist. That really was--

SMITH: At what stage in their careers?

HERRMANN: At what stage in their careers, yes. And so on.

SMITH: And this, from Pinder, was quite new at the time?

HERRMANN: That was new. It was progressive, forward. The other one was Frankl.

SMITH: Well, how did Frankl influence you?

HERRMANN: Well, what he wrote. I forget now what the book is called. He wrote very much about space and about the baroque buildings from inside. Whereas Pinder--and I, too--talked more from the outside. Now, Frankl's spatial analysis influenced me, certainly.

SMITH: I was going to ask you about space, particularly in the Pinder-Wölfflin question. Because Pinder, I



understand, was a student of [August] Schmarsow, and Schmarsow had disputed with Wölfflin at the beginning of the century over the relationship of form, Formgefühl versus Raumkunst.

HERRMANN: I don't think that had an influence on me.

SMITH: That did not?

HERRMANN: No. The whole Vienna school and Schmarsow--

SMITH: No?

HERRMANN: [Hans] Tietze perhaps, but later.

SMITH: So the Vienna school, you didn't feel their ideas were relevant to what you were studying?

HERRMANN: I don't know. Probably I didn't know enough about it.

SMITH: Well, that's honest. Another thing that is curious to me-- And I think, again, it's true of Frankl, perhaps less so of Wölfflin. But medieval art and the Gothic seemed to be the main subject of study by the generation preceding yours. You turned to baroque. Is that in part because you felt that the Gothic was already well mined?

HERRMANN: No, I think--and that went right through for the next ten years--quite simply I disliked Gothic. Quite simply. I never-- Or much later, only. But in these years when I would have had occasion to acknowledge the work that other art historians did about Gothic art, I just did not deal with them at all. I just put them aside. Why, I



don't know. It was the baroque which impressed me, which excited me, and not Gothic. My own experience of Gothic came much later. But all through, even until my latest introduction, I treated the interest of people in the twentieth century in Gothic very poorly.

SMITH: Yeah, the Gothic seems to relate to a rather intense German nationalism, the idea of Gothic as a German art form.

HERRMANN: I don't know. I don't think that-- Yes, that was especially in the nineteenth century. At my time, it was closely connected with expressionism, I think. I appreciated expressionism. But people who were interested in Gothic--modern writers, modern artists--they were close to expressionism. It wasn't so much a patriotism. That was in the nineteenth century, very much so. The beginning of the nineteenth century, but not at that time.

SMITH: But in your discussion of the baroque-- Perhaps I'm misreading it from--what is it now?--sixty-five years later. There did seem to be an emphasis on national characteristics, and the use of the phrase "reine deutsche Kunst" reoccurs and "reine deutsche Musik."

HERRMANN: It's an irony. Interesting.

SMITH: And the baroque as a quintessentially German art form.

HERRMANN: I see. Well, as I said, I didn't read it, so I



don't know. But I must have said that. Now, all that is purely personal. Of course, I wasn't patriotic in that sense. Alone, my Jewishness would have-- My democratic upbringing would have stopped me from this. But I was-- Until Hitler came, I felt German. And I could have written that. I mean, if you say I have written that, that's a different person.

SMITH: Well, of course! [laughter]

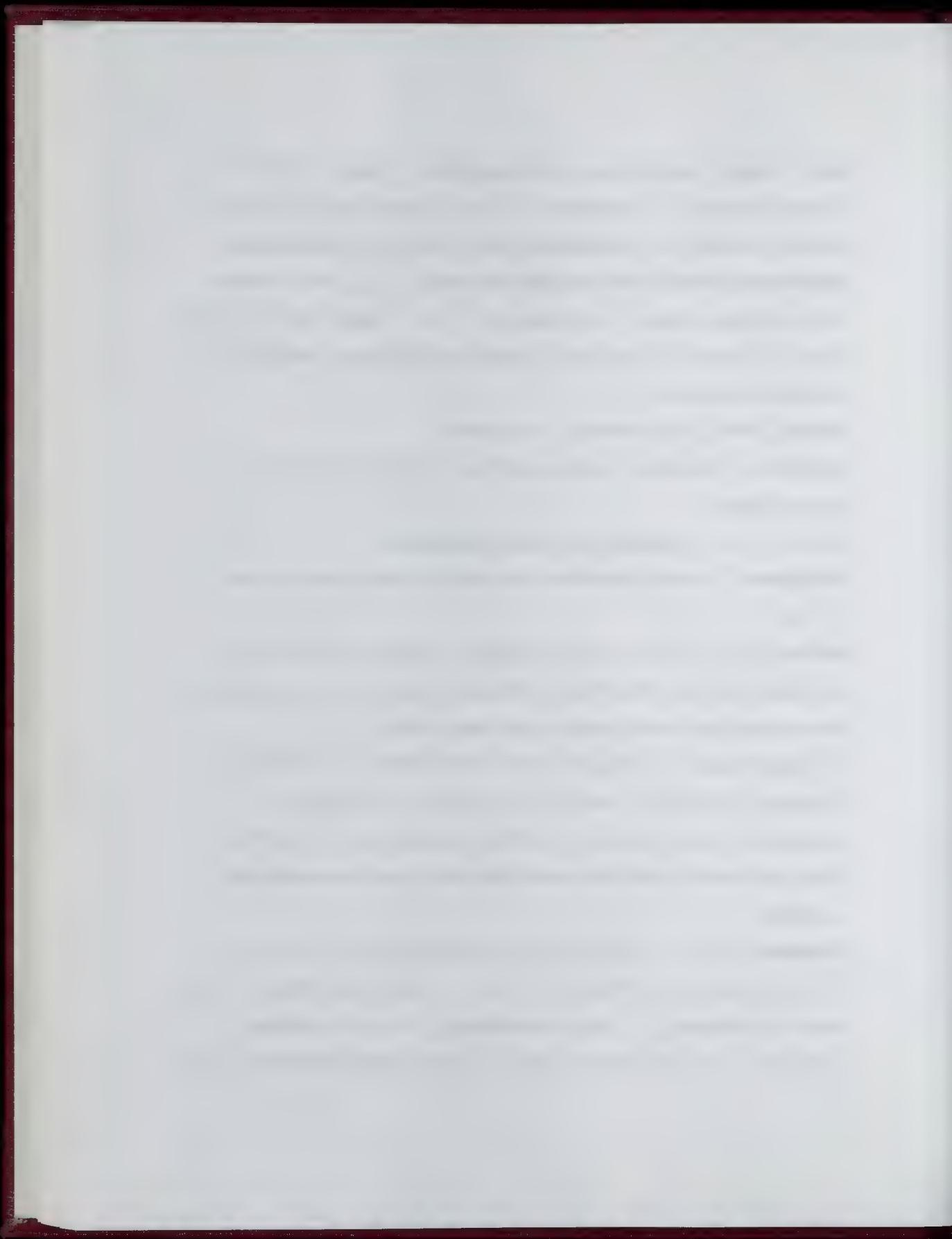
HERRMANN: Possibly I have written that twenty years, ten years later.

SMITH: No, it would have been impossible.

HERRMANN: I must have felt no inhibition to write that if I did.

SMITH: No. It struck me because it seems there was a polarity in your thinking. Because from the way you have described your upbringing, you have kind of an internationalist outlook, even from before you moved to England. A kind of rational, you know, anti-mystic approach. Down-to-earth, perhaps skeptical of a certain kind of German idealist thinking that was prevalent in academia.

HERRMANN: Well, I can only tell you that when I went to Italy on several occasions, I felt I came home when I came back to Germany. I felt completely, "It's my country." And when I had to leave-- My wife [Anni Marx Herrmann], for



instance, couldn't leave early enough. She didn't want to stay one minute longer. It was difficult for me to sever. So there were some bonds, which I expressed apparently.

SMITH: That's interesting about your wife. In other interviews I have done with German-Jewish émigrés, there seems to be a pattern where it was the women in the family who said, "Something terrible is going to happen. We have to get out." And the men saying, "No, Hitler will pass." Or "It won't be that bad, somehow." They struggle, and the women win out.

HERRMANN: Yeah, that is-- Of course, one reason is that in those families probably the man was the one who earned the living, and he had to look after it. It was easy for the wife to say, "Let's get out." But he had to think whether they could manage. The other thing is my wife's background is more Jewish, consciously Jewish. I didn't tell you, but I was baptized as a baby.

SMITH: No, you didn't mention that.

HERRMANN: It has become so immaterial. Probably if we would have had the interview sixty years ago, it may have come up before. No, the family I was brought up in belonged to a certain section of the Berlin society, well-to-do Jewish families. Some of them you know by name. One is Ullstein, Cassirer, and there are many others. There



was a strong anti-Semitic trend before I was born, at the end of the nineteenth century. I think as a reaction against it, it was very usual for them to convert. Either they themselves or the children. Now, all the Ullsteins, all the Cassirers I know, anyhow, and many other families baptized and had their children brought up in the Christian faith.

SMITH: And the Evangelical? In the Evangelical denomination, the Lutheran?

HERRMANN: Lutheran, yeah. And some of them converted themselves. I think all the Ullstein brothers converted. My father also, but for another reason. His business was in Russia, and he couldn't get a passport as long as he was Jewish, a passport valid in Russia. I mean, they wouldn't--

SMITH: An entry visa.

HERRMANN: He couldn't have done business in Russia. So he converted, but my mother never. But this also may be interesting to you, because it is not so much me, but it is a part of the society in Berlin before Hitler. So there I grew up with my father and my mother both in different confessions.

And there was the German state. Whenever somebody moved, you had to register with the police. For some reason or other-- Probably we had a new maid. My mother had to fill out--or my father--a police registration. And



there it gives not only the name of the person on the register, but with whom she lives. So my father, my mother, and so on. I came home from school and this registration was on the desk of my mother. And I looked at it and saw "Richard Herrmann, Protestant; Anna Herrmann, Mosaic." It's the first time I knew that my mother was-- [laughter] That gives you an idea of how unimportant the whole thing was. Nobody mentioned that to the children. And I went to school and had Christian-Protestant teaching.

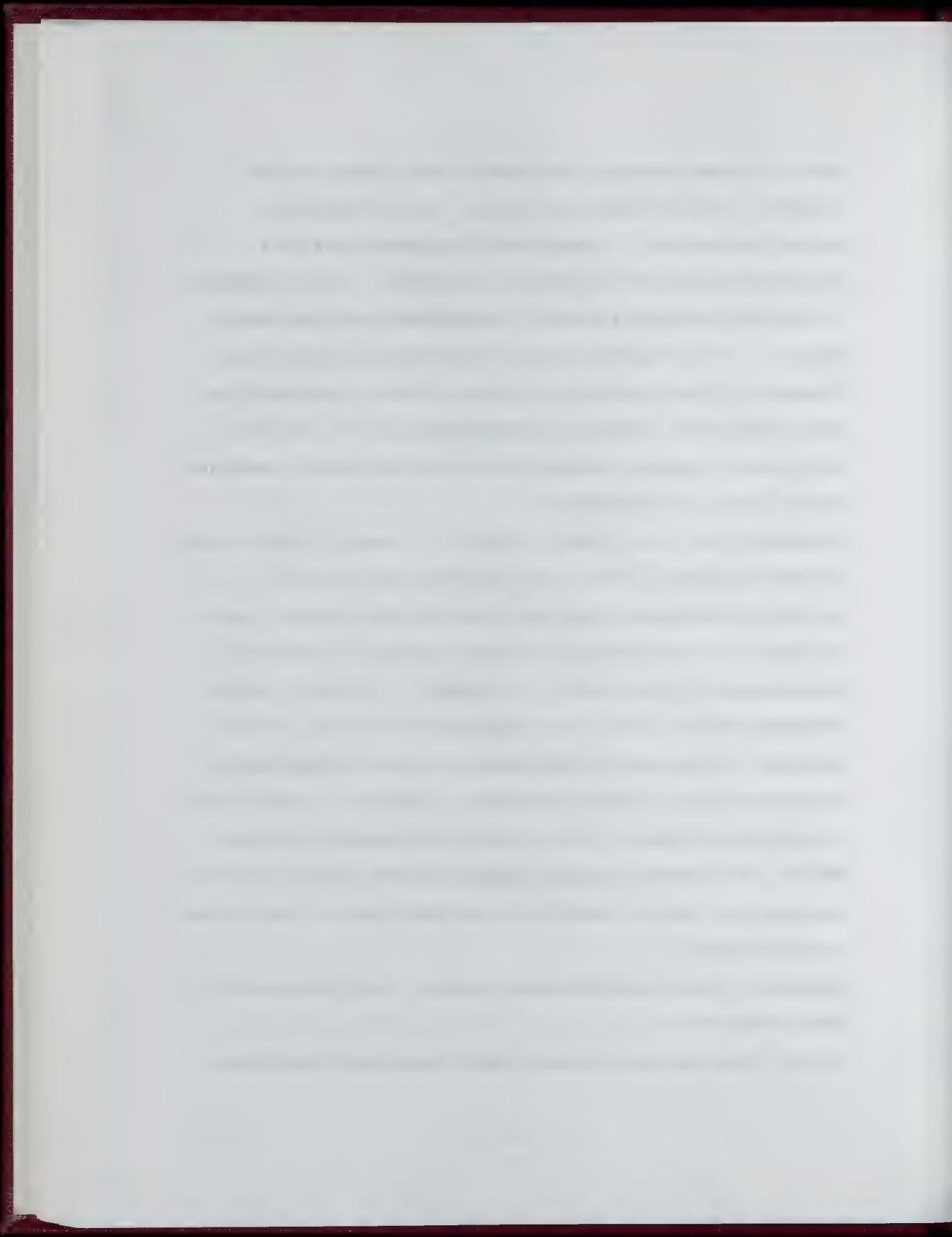
SMITH: Were you confirmed?

HERRMANN: No. No. Then I said no. I mean, I don't think it was suggested. Then I met my wife, and she was certainly convinced, true; she knew she was Jewish. And she said, "I don't marry you unless you get out of the Protestantry." So I said, "All right." It didn't matter anything to me. And, as it happened in Germany, it was nothing. I just had to say that I am leaving the church. Apart from this, I even saved money, because I didn't have to pay church taxes. It is a very unbelievable attitude.

SMITH: Was there a clausus numerus [quota system limiting admission of Jewish students to universities] in the German universities?

HERRMANN: There was in several cases. Now, that wouldn't have affected me.

SMITH: Because your passport would have said Christian.



HERRMANN: Until I stopped, I was a normal person.  
[laughter] It's very cynical, the whole thing. But there were many, many people exactly the same. With all these in my generation being baptized, not being asked, at birth. So that's why when it came to leaving, my wife was much more definite that she wanted to leave. And with me, the Jewishness was brought out and forward and made conscious through Hitler.

SMITH: When you were in Munich as a student, the Nazi party was already present there. Did it have a force in the university already by that time?

HERRMANN: No. No, I didn't notice it. I didn't notice it, and there were a circle of young people of all description. No. You only mentioned the other day-- The [Walter von] Rathenau assassination happened when I was at Munich. On that day I was, in connection with my studies, in a church which I very much admired, when a friend of mine, who was a very conscious Jewish boy, came into the church and said, "Rathenau has been assassinated!" Although I was as shocked as he was, I remained in the church to continue my studies, whereas he could not stay on. I told this to my wife. I said, "When I heard of--" She is seven years younger, so she must have been thirteen or fourteen. She lived in the Grunewald near to the Rathenau villa, where he was shot. She and a boy from the



neighboring school went on their bikes to find the murderers. What a different reaction!

SMITH: Of course, then the murderers got off with very light sentences. I think five years was the heaviest sentence.

HERRMANN: Well, from there on it started to dawn on me what was going on already in Munich. I remember in '30, we--my wife and I--were on a motor trip through Germany. And in the Rhineland, there were already Hakenkreuze [swastikas]! My horn went wrong, and I drove through these Hakenkreuze, this Nazi town, with the horn blowing away. I couldn't stop it. [laughter] From '30 on, it was obvious that-- And everyone was involved politically in elections.

SMITH: I think later on we will be getting into the question of how these experiences influenced your thinking on art history and the role of-- Well, later on I think we will want to talk about how your experiences influenced your interpretation of, say, Gottfried Semper's life. We will get into that further down the road. But continuing in Munich with Wölfflin, you described a little bit about why you decided to go to Munich. You wanted a broader approach to art history than what [Adolph] Goldschmidt was giving you. I wonder if you could give a sense of how Wölfflin taught. You said at one point that he was a crude person compared to other German professors. How did that

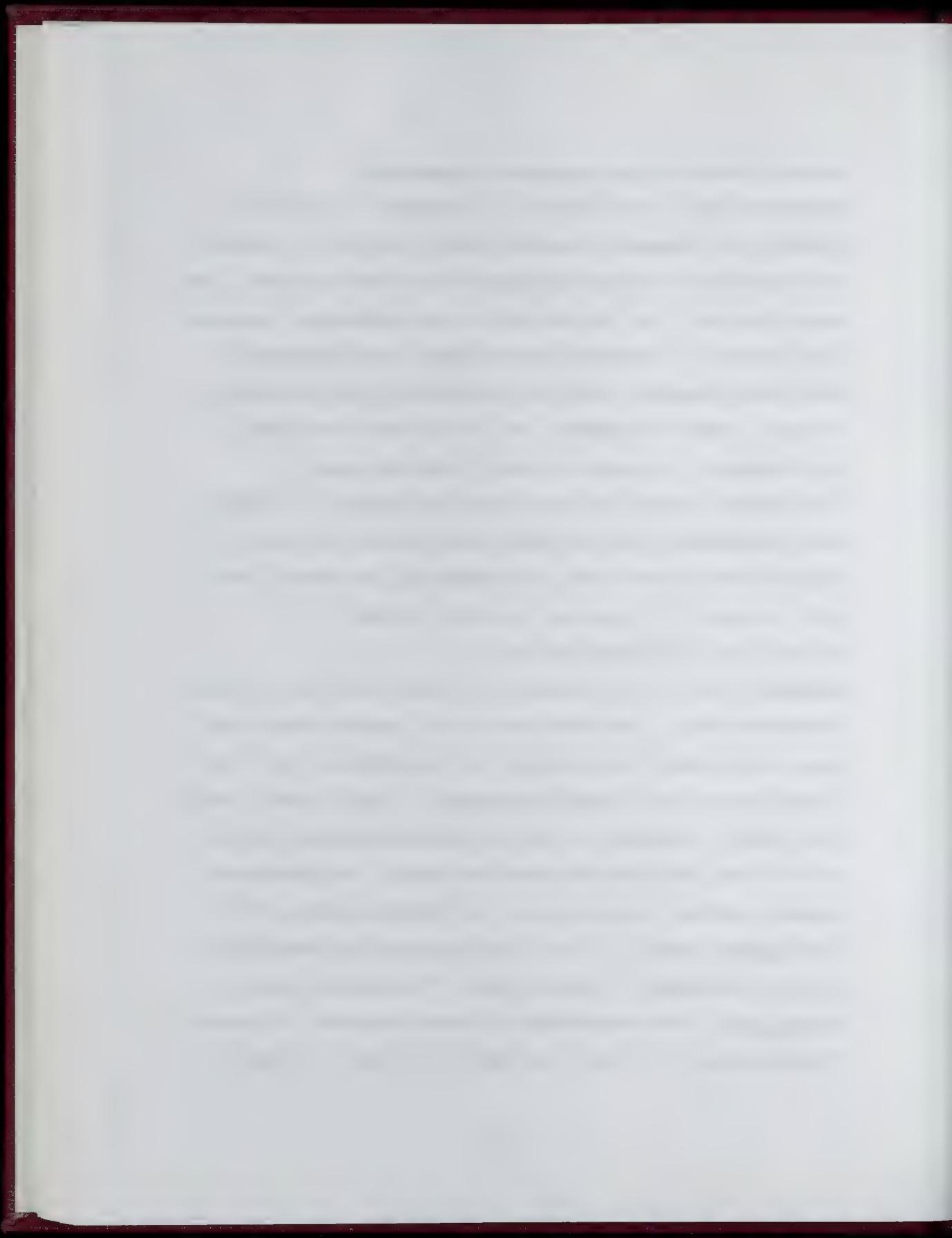


reflect itself in his lectures or seminars?

HERRMANN: Well, the lectures, I remember-- I couldn't possibly not remember, because he was the star in Munich at the time and the whole town went to hear the lectures. You could just go. His lecture was in the auditorium, maximum, huge affair. I remember that he spoke about Mantegna, a particular lecture, which was impressive, just the way he thought. That I remember. But I also must have been in his seminars. I'm sorry to say I have not much recollection except his ways, this abruptness. It wasn't easy to approach him. He was a more famous man than Goldschmidt at that time, and especially in Munich. But I told you before, I can tell you very little.

SMITH: Let's see what you can.

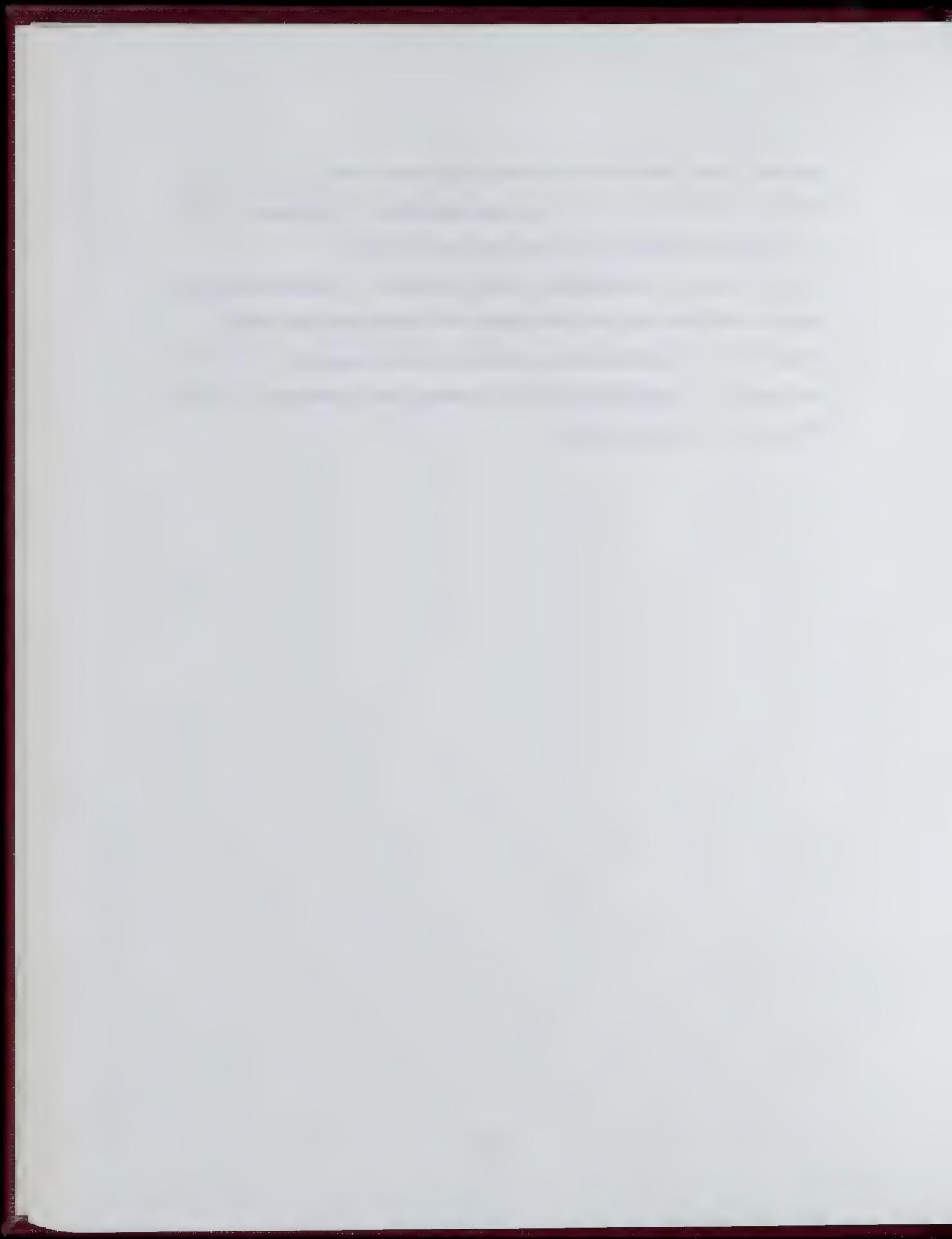
HERRMANN: Well, the anecdote I may have told you-- I just remembered this. He asked some of his seminar pupils to tea--or whatever--in his home, and he asked me, too. Why, I don't know, but I must [inaudible]. I don't know. The only thing I remember is that he had an assistant whom he didn't like, but the assistant was there. The assistant [asked] whether he could come. And Wölfflin said, "Well, kreti pleti comes." I don't know whether you understand. Kreti, "everybody"--"anybody comes," "everybody comes." Kreti pleti is an expression-- It must be Greek. It means, "Anybody comes, you can come too." And that, in heavy



Swiss-- Just telling this very shy assistant in his face.

That was Wölfflin. That is one anecdote I remember, that he, in my presence, came and he said that.

SMITH: Well, Goldschmidt, for instance, in his seminars he would take one object and then the whole seminar would be based on an analysis of a single object, usually a medieval reliquary. How did Wölfflin organize his seminars? Were they in a similar style?



TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 7, 1990

SMITH: You were already starting to work on the high baroque monastery, and you were going out and examining works and monasteries in south Germany, Bavaria and Swabia. Did you go into Austria as well? And Moravia?

HERRMANN: Yes, to-- Well, the Austrian ones: Melk, Gottweig, Klosterneuburg. There is a folder with all the photographs I took [located in the Wolfgang Herrmann papers in the archives of the J. Paul Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities]. Wherever there are photographs, I was there. [laughter]

SMITH: You took them.

HERRMANN: I took them, or most of them. I was in Klosterneuburg last year and had no idea that I had been there before. And I said, "I must, when I come here [the Getty Center], have a look at the folder that I had." But there must be one.

SMITH: Wölfflin stressed the importance of art historians doing their own drawings of what they were studying. Did you do that?

HERRMANN: No, I didn't. Well, there are a few drawings, if you can call them that. But I'm not very good in drawing. No, not really.

SMITH: He said it didn't matter if you were good in



drawing. It was just that the act of drawing forced you to see what's there. The act of drawing forced you to see what was in front of you.

HERRMANN: I liked that. Later on, I remember, I tried it again, but I was always unsuccessful. But I like to do it, yes.

SMITH: He was also-- At the time that you were a student there, I was reading-- There is a book of his letters and diaries that's been published. Apparently at the very time that you were there, he was expressing in his diaries and in letters to his relatives and to his peers that he was disillusioned with the whole project of art history.

HERRMANN: Really?

SMITH: And then he resigned, of course, about a year after you left. Was that getting expressed at all in his relationship with students?

HERRMANN: Well, I don't-- No, I can't say.

SMITH: There was a phrase, a sentence actually, in your dissertation that struck me as being very Wölfflinian. You said that the new way of seeing of the seventeenth century found its highest expression in the monasteries.

HERRMANN: Certainly at that time, it wasn't-- [Cornelius] Gurlitt wrote in the late eighties appreciating baroque. Still, when I started in the twenties, to see the positive side of the baroque was new, comparatively new. I mean,



Pinder did it, and I did it then, too. So it was-- I think in that sense baroque on its own had its great values, and not as a reaction to Klassizismus, which was more Wölfflin's attitude.

SMITH: How did you feel about the thinking of Alois Riegl on baroque?

HERRMANN: It must have had some influence on me.

SMITH: He wrote a lot, of course, about ornamentation.

HERRMANN: Yeah. I don't remember. It must have--

SMITH: I didn't see much in your dissertation on the question of ornamentation. Did you choose not to?

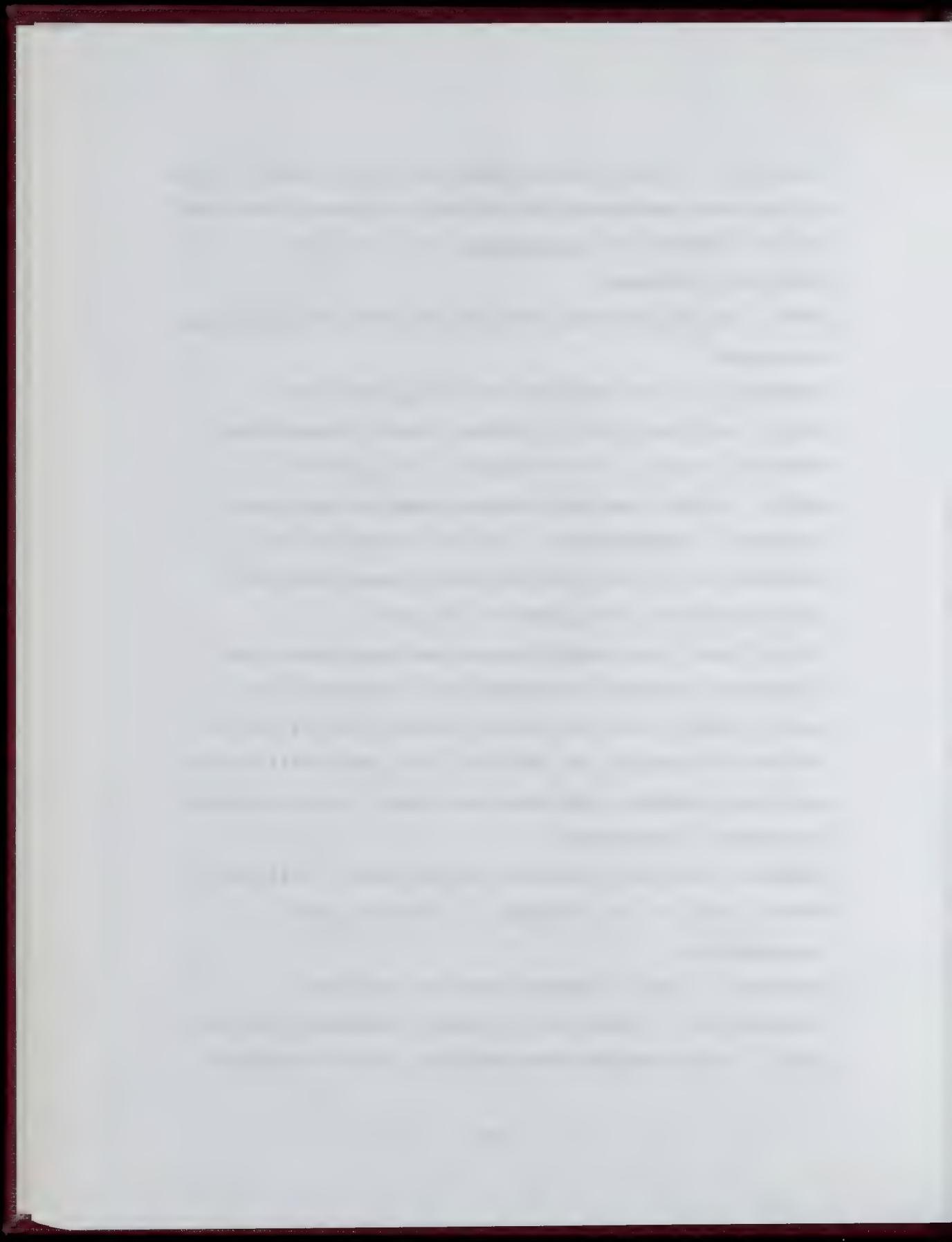
HERRMANN: No, it was more the whole organization of a building and the development of the type.

SMITH: Yeah. And [Hans] Jantzen had talked about the diaphanous structure, the walls that dissolved. And, again, I didn't see-- Of course, perhaps that is how you defined your problem for yourself. You were dealing more with plan, perhaps, than with the effect. Do you see the distinction I'm making?

HERRMANN: What is it you are talking about? Building?

SMITH: Yeah, of the building. In terms of your dissertation.

HERRMANN: I see. I suppose when you read the dissertation, it looks as if I'm only concerned with the plan. I could imagine that that is-- I don't think that I



completely only saw the plan, but I can imagine that that is the impression.

SMITH: Well, let's go on to-- Well, actually I have one more question about Wölfflin. This is something that you said last time, that you had to leave Wölfflin because he was so concentrated on form that it was blocking you from getting at what interested you. Aside from the fact of how one evaluates the importance of baroque, how would Wölfflin's formal approach hinder what you wanted to do?

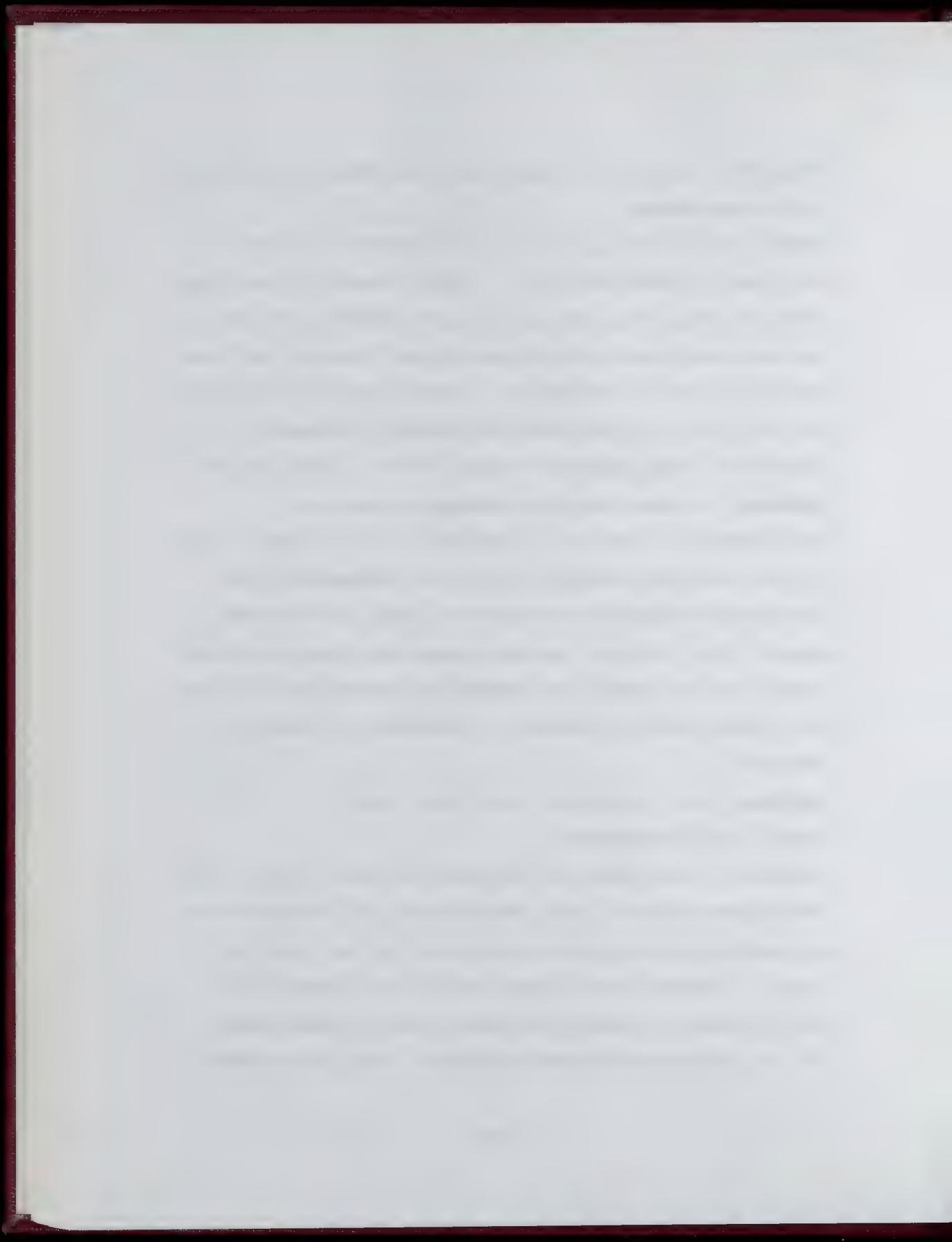
HERRMANN: I think that his concept of form, the absoluteness of form out of time and out of history, as if it were something absolute, would have stopped me from seeing the baroque as an expression of an age that had ended. That, I think, was one reason why I went to Pinder.

SMITH: Was it unusual for German art historians to relate art to political or economic or intellectual trends in a society?

HERRMANN: No. I think it came later, but--

SMITH: That came later?

HERRMANN: Yeah. Now, you may know that well, but I think this happened after I left art history, the integration of art history with many other subjects. We may come to that. I remember when I came back to art history and I sent a paper to [Rudolf] Wittkower, and he talked about it. He wrote about it saying that in these twenty years



art history developed towards using source material, coming from various sources--much stronger. That was a development, he said, the last twenty years, which means it must have come out after '30. And according to that, it was not normal.

SMITH: Were you aware of what was going on at the Warburg Institute in Hamburg?

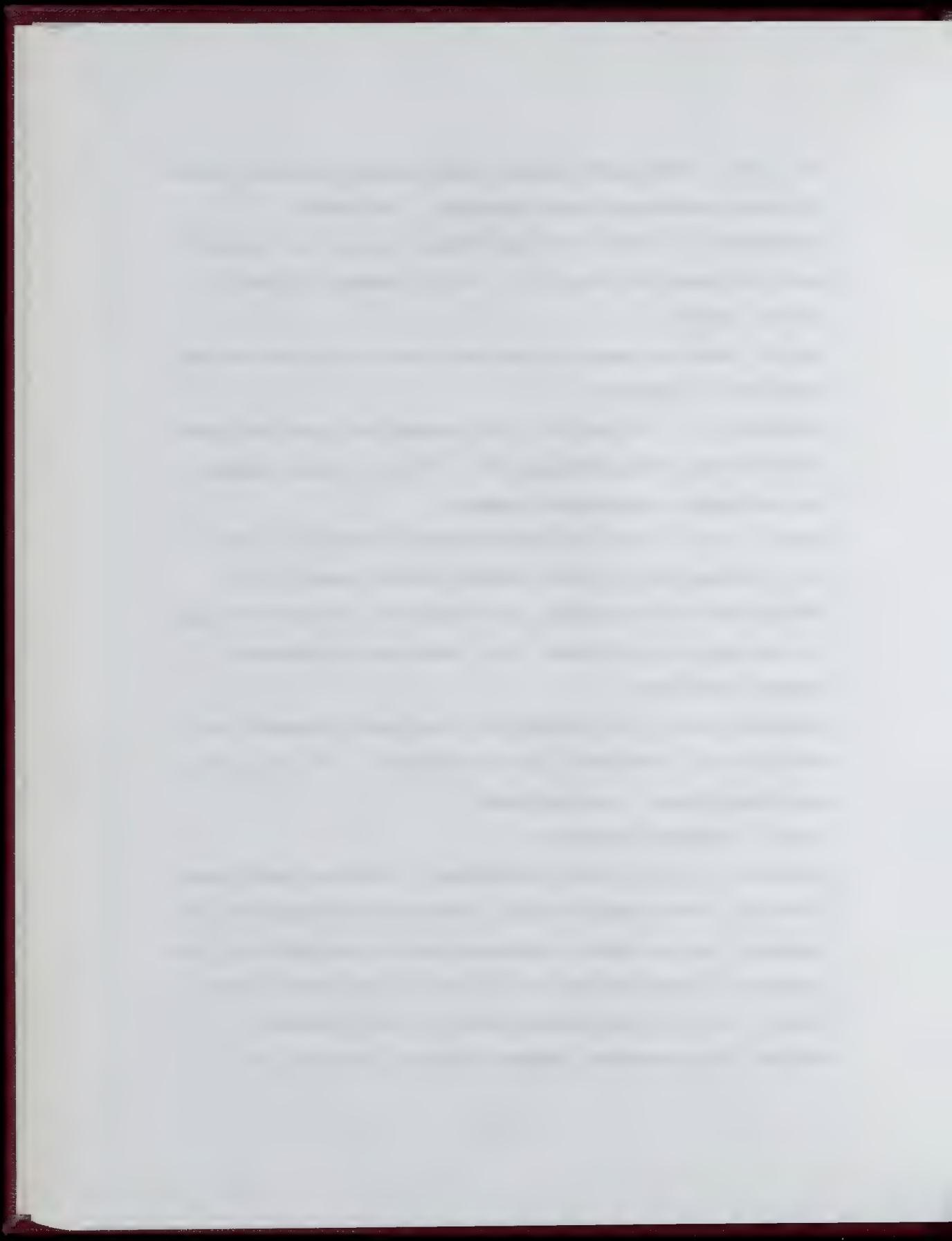
HERRMANN: No. Not at all. Of course, Wittkower was then influenced by [Aby] Warburg, but I think he came towards the attitude of Warburg by himself.

SMITH: Yeah. Let's talk about Wilhelm Pinder a little bit. Perhaps let's first compare [the University of] Leipzig and [the University of] Munich as universities and the university life there. Was there much difference between those two?

HERRMANN: Well, no. Munich is a much more pleasant town than Leipzig. But there was a difference. I'm not quite sure when I came. Do you know?

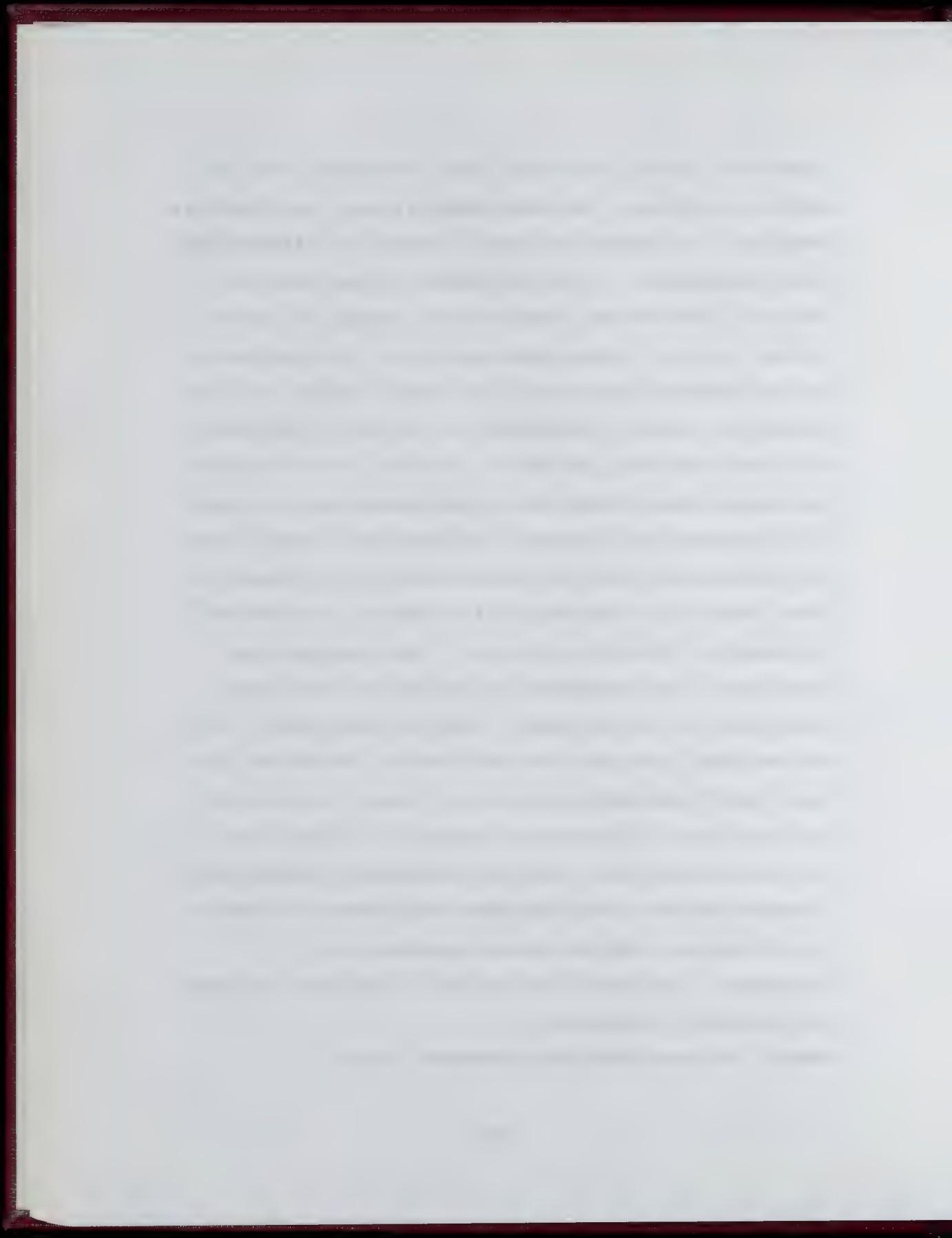
SMITH: Nineteen twenty-two.

HERRMANN: In '22 I came to Leipzig. Nineteen twenty-one, in Munich, was a comparatively normal time economically in Germany. And although I remember that it was difficult for students to meet the cost of living, it was more or less normal. By '22, and then especially '23, inflation started, and inflation changed Leipzig. The life of



students in Leipzig [was] very much [different] from the students in Munich. The town itself is ugly, and Munich is beautiful. But apart from this, I think the inflation made quite a difference. I was in Leipzig at the height of inflation, when we had lectures which stopped at twelve o'clock, or, no, it must have been later. But the dollar rate of exchange came out at, say, twelve thirty, and the prices were marked up according to the rate of the dollar, so it was vital that you were in the shop to buy whatever you wanted before twelve thirty when goods were still sold at the previous day's prices. So by eleven fifteen, more and more students left the lecture room to get [there] in time. That was at the height of inflation. So that was one aspect of the life in Leipzig. The other was that there were, like everywhere now, people who were black marketeers, or who got money. There was easy money. On the one hand, there was terrible poverty, and on the other hand, there were people with lots of money. So the life and night life in Leipzig was booming at the same time. It was an unhealthy time. And that stopped on a certain day, I forget the date, when the German high finance decided to stop inflation. And the German Rentenmark was introduced. That meant from one day to the next, inflation was finished. Unbelievable.

SMITH: You were relatively insulated from--



HERRMANN: I was. I knew that I always could get money from my father when I needed it. On the other hand, I wanted to live within my allowance.

SMITH: Pinder as a person, was he a friendly man?

HERRMANN: Yeah. A very amusing man, very unconventional, completely different than Wölfflin was. Wölfflin was a grand figure, and Pinder was a bit of an older student and full of tales. He was quite a storyteller.

SMITH: How did he, in terms of--? You came to him with your proposal for a dissertation. Did he have any suggestions to you about organization?

HERRMANN: Yes, he must have. Yes. He knew what I wanted to do, and he was interested in it. He must have made suggestions. I don't remember, but he must have. But he was the only one. I had other subjects, archaeology.

SMITH: Now, you studied with [Franz] Studniczka.

HERRMANN: Studniczka, he was a different man.

[laughter] The main subject was art history with Pinder, and I was examined by him. But I knew I would get through, and I was not worried. But Studniczka was much more difficult, and I worked like mad.

SMITH: Was that classical archaeology?

HERRMANN: Yeah, classical archaeology. He was a stern, severe old man. And there I didn't know whether I would pass at all.



SMITH: Did you do any fieldwork for that?

HERRMANN: No. No, it was just learning.

SMITH: Now, your other examiner was Hans Driesch.

HERRMANN: Oh, philosophy.

SMITH: The philosopher.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: The follower of Henri Bergson in Germany.

HERRMANN: He wrote about--

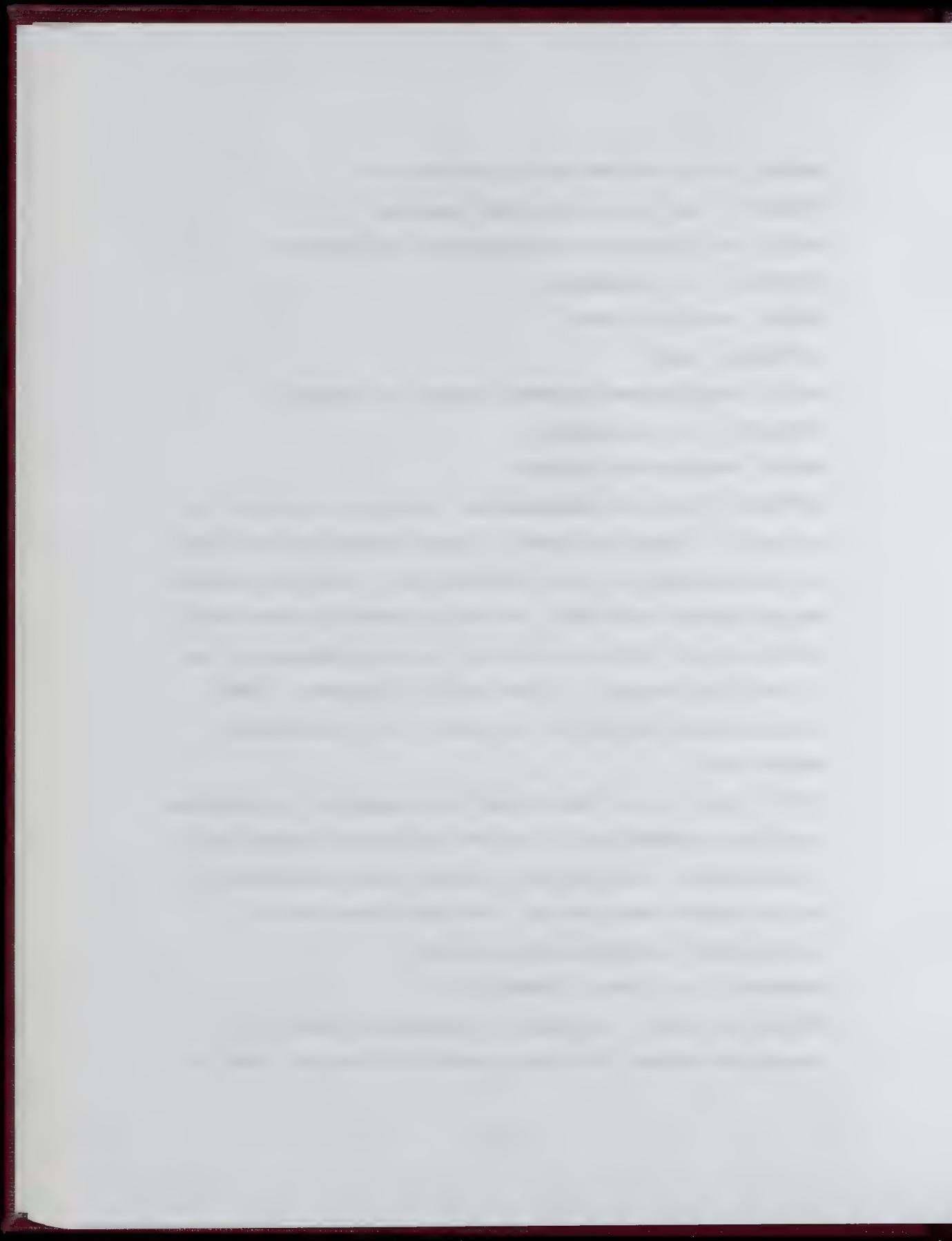
SMITH: Bergson and vitalism.

HERRMANN: Well, my philosophical studies are a joke. You tell me-- I never knew them. I know Driesch by name, but that he examined me-- Now it comes back to me that he asked very primitive questions. So he was obviously aware that here is an art historian who does that only because he has to have that subject. In contrast to Studniczka, [who] really pressed me, he was very kind. But I completely forgot that.

SMITH: Well, one of the things that piqued my interest was that Driesch wrote about vitalism and the biological basis of philosophy. Here you have Pinder, also interested in the biological basis of art. Was there more than a coincidental connection between them?

HERRMANN: But I wasn't aware of it.

SMITH: Oh, okay. You know, you explained Pinder's generation problem in a very concise and rational kind of



way. Yet there is a lot of Pinder that is hard for me to understand why it would be appealing to people in the 1920s.

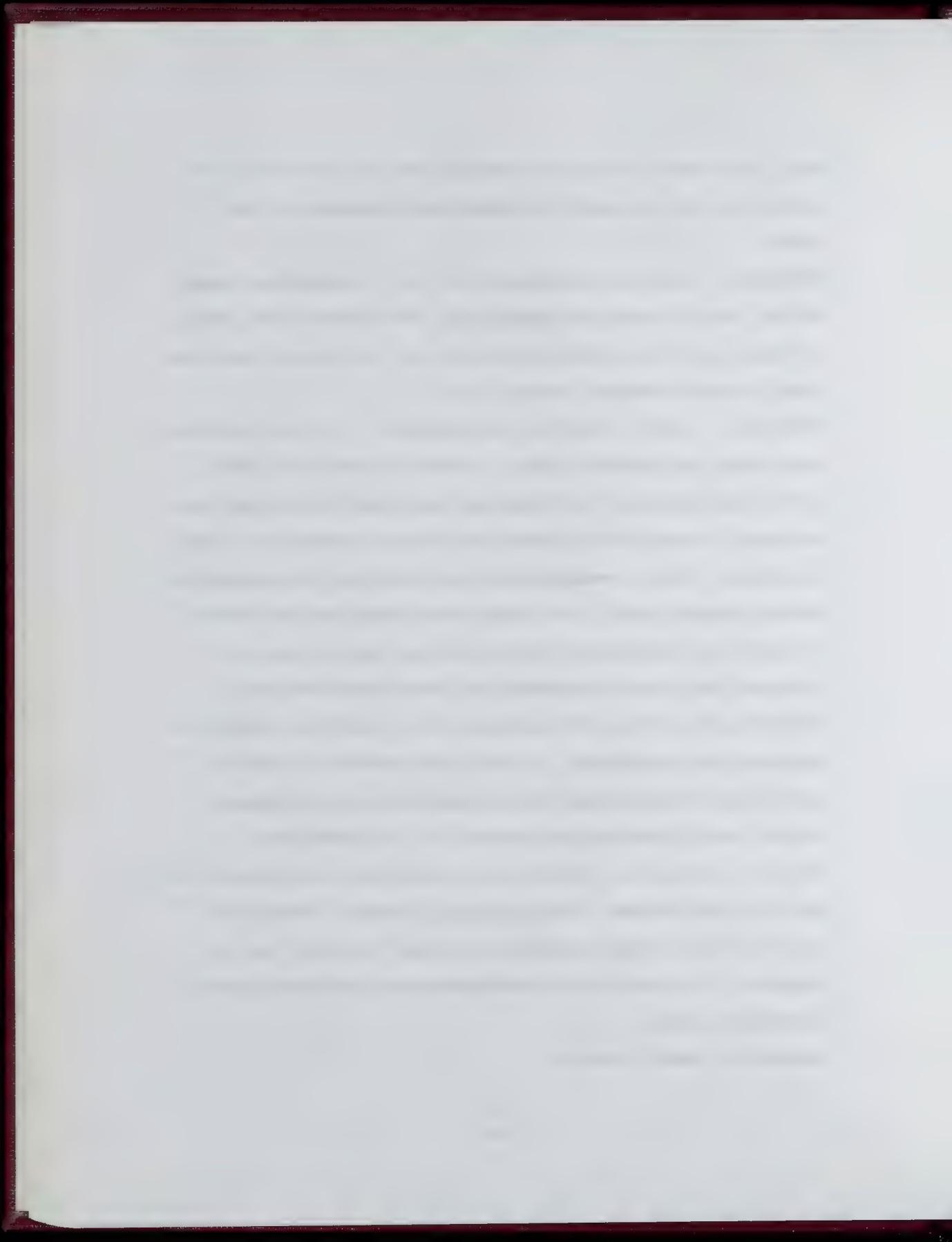
HERRMANN: It's that difficult for you to understand now?

SMITH: Why it would be appealing. The ideas I get, more or less, but it's difficult to see why the kind of mystical side, the nationalist side of it--

HERRMANN: I don't think it was mystical. It was upsetting the order, the normal order. Suddenly a work of-- Well, it's a bad example. A Titian was put next to somebody who was dead already fifty years when Titian painted his last painting. This is exaggerated, and this way the generation theory doesn't work. But apart from these extreme cases, it upset and rearranged and opened new vistas when you arranged the people according to their birth and not according to living at a certain time. And that made a new approach that appealed. I don't know whether Pinder's generation [theory] was really something extraordinary.

SMITH: Well, the way you explain it, it seems very rational, actually. But he also wrote that each generation had its own destiny. Its Schicksal, which I think is a word that had larger connotations than "destiny" has in English. You know, as if each generation had been given a problem to solve.

HERRMANN: Yeah. That--



SMITH: Would you agree with that?

HERRMANN: Yes. That probably-- I don't know whether I agree in that particular case, but I can see that that was appealing in the twenties.

SMITH: He said already in the twenties that the destiny of his generation was to unite nature and spirit, Geist and Natur, to bring them together and make them into a unity. Which, of course, in the phenomenological sense, is ending the separation between object and subject.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: At this time was he already tending--? What did Pinder think about the Nazis?

HERRMANN: No. No, I had no, no idea. The only thing was he was an easygoing man and also easy with his conscience. I think that feeling you could have.

SMITH: Why do you think he has been so forgotten after 1945, given the importance he had even prior to the Nazis coming to power?

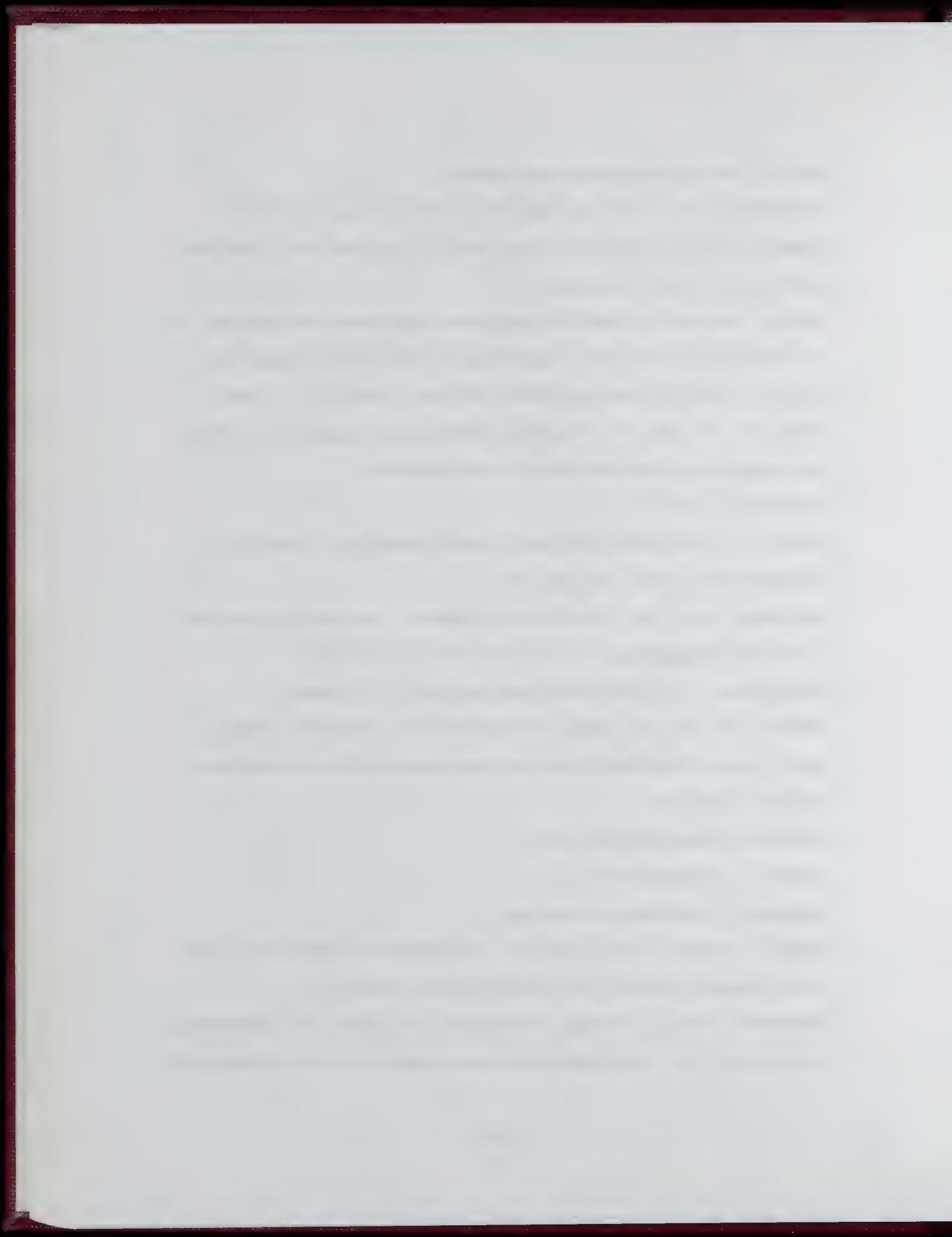
HERRMANN: When did he die?

SMITH: I believe '47.

HERRMANN: Soon after the war.

SMITH: Shortly after the war. He seems to have been-- He is no longer studied very much in art history.

HERRMANN: Well, his Nazi membership may have had something to do with it. But there are many other art historians who



carried on all through the Nazi period of whom I don't know whether they were or not--probably they were. But they worked and wrote and are still studied. But Pinder was more active.

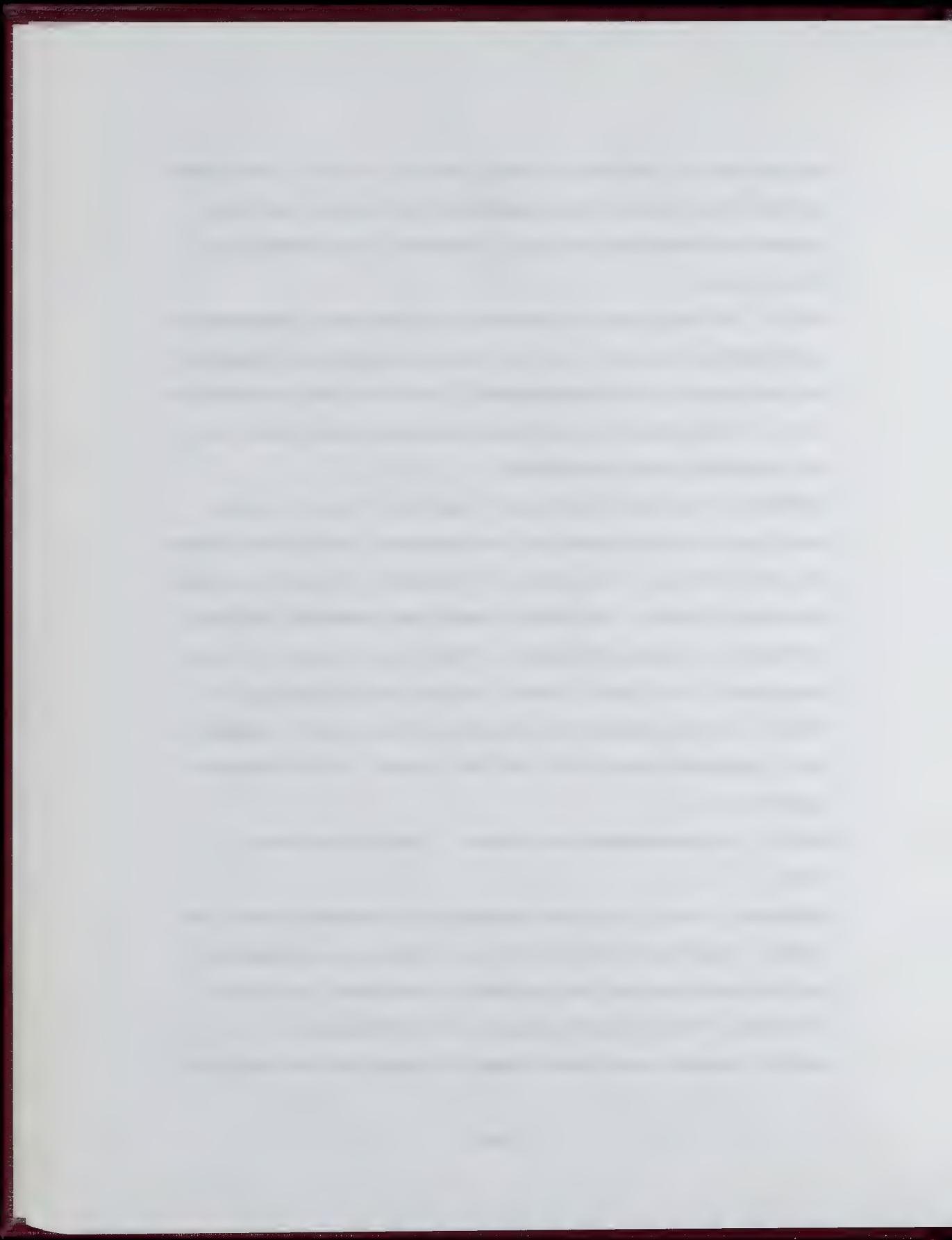
SMITH: He later got in trouble with the Nazis, apparently, right before the war. And in '44, he helped put together the festschrift for Goldschmidt. He wrote the introduction to it, which struck me as being something that, for '44, was actually quite courageous.

HERRMANN: But what did he do? Was he--? How--? I only heard part of his speech on the wireless, and I didn't know who was talking. Only after it finished, it said this was Professor Pinder. And what I heard was somebody talking certainly in terms of Nazism. That's all I knew of Pinder being Nazi, but I don't know. But he was Ordinarius in Berlin, and of course that implies-- When I left Leipzig in 1927, the Nazis were still on the fringe. But he was an opportunist.

SMITH: You mentioned that before. What do you mean by that?

HERRMANN: Well, if it was opportune to become a Nazi, he would. That would fit in with my-- He was so easygoing, and the easy way was not to make a fuss about political attitude. That I could imagine, but otherwise I--

SMITH: Hannah Arendt is a name I'm sure you are familiar



with. And she was at [the University of] Freiburg at the same time that you were.

HERRMANN: Was she?

SMITH: Yes. She wrote that the German university students, at least the people that she hung out with, made a point of never reading the newspapers, because they were separating themselves from politics, which they thought was bunk. What was your attitude? Did you follow politics? Was it or was it not of terrible interest to you?

HERRMANN: Well, probably in these early days, politics didn't enter very much. Then, later on, through the Nazification, it became important.

SMITH: Are you familiar with the concept of the deutsche Sonderweg?

HERRMANN: No, I don't know it at all.

SMITH: Well, it was a concept that was current in the German universities at the time of Germany having its own way, being very different from any other country in Europe.

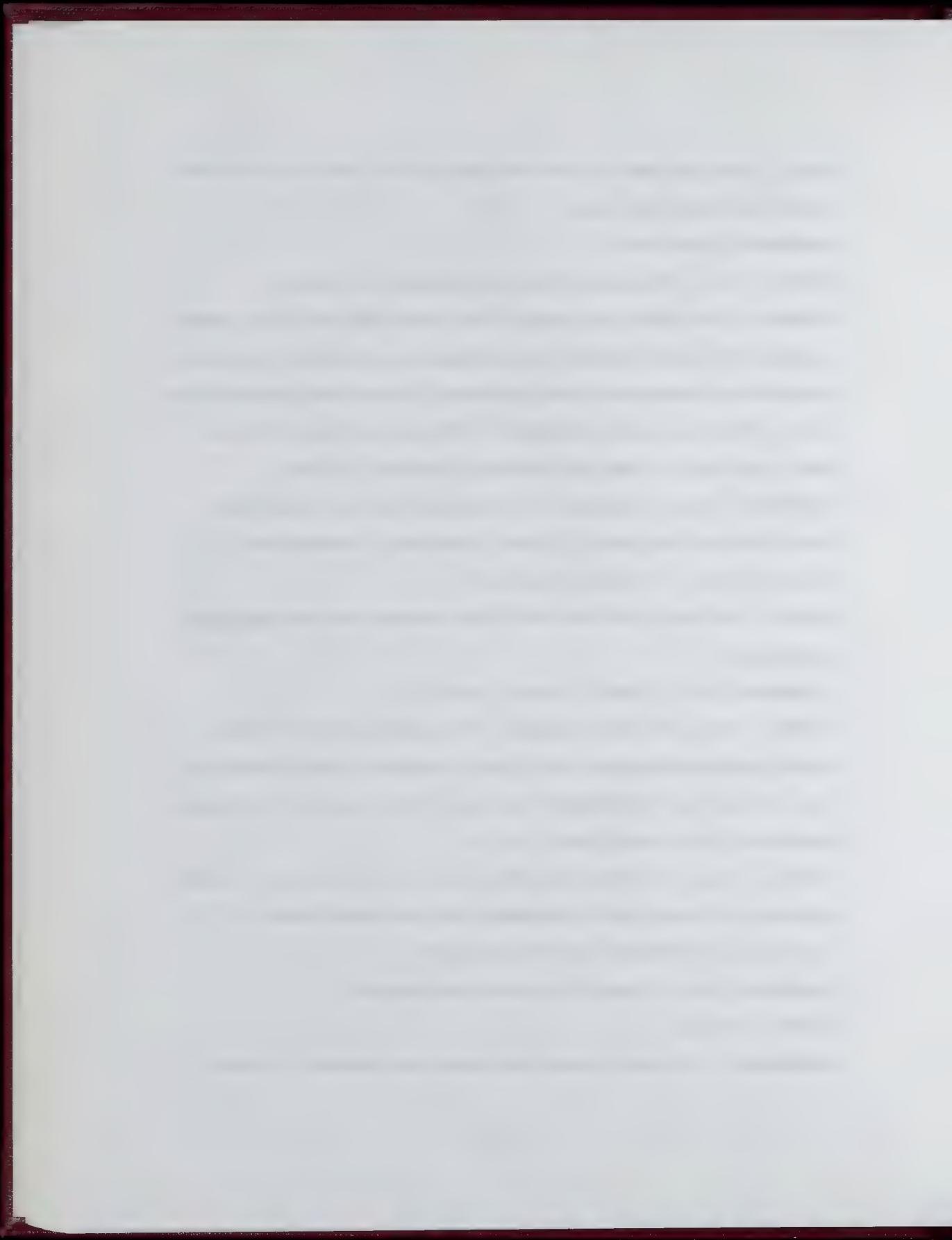
HERRMANN: No, never heard of it.

SMITH: Okay. At the time that you were studying, to what degree was German art considered to be subordinate, ancillary, to French and Italian art?

HERRMANN: No, it was the other way around.

SMITH: It was--

HERRMANN: I think it was the other way around. I mean,



the consciousness of expressionist art and being conscious of German theater, German cinema. German art was far in advance of-- Well, not impressionism. It was then very striking when we came to England.

SMITH: Yeah. [laughter]

HERRMANN: When we arrived, architecturally, it was unbelievable.

SMITH: I wasn't talking so much about contemporary art at the time. But in your art history classes, to what degree were Holbein and Dürer considered ancillary to what was going on in Italy at the time? And so on, throughout the--

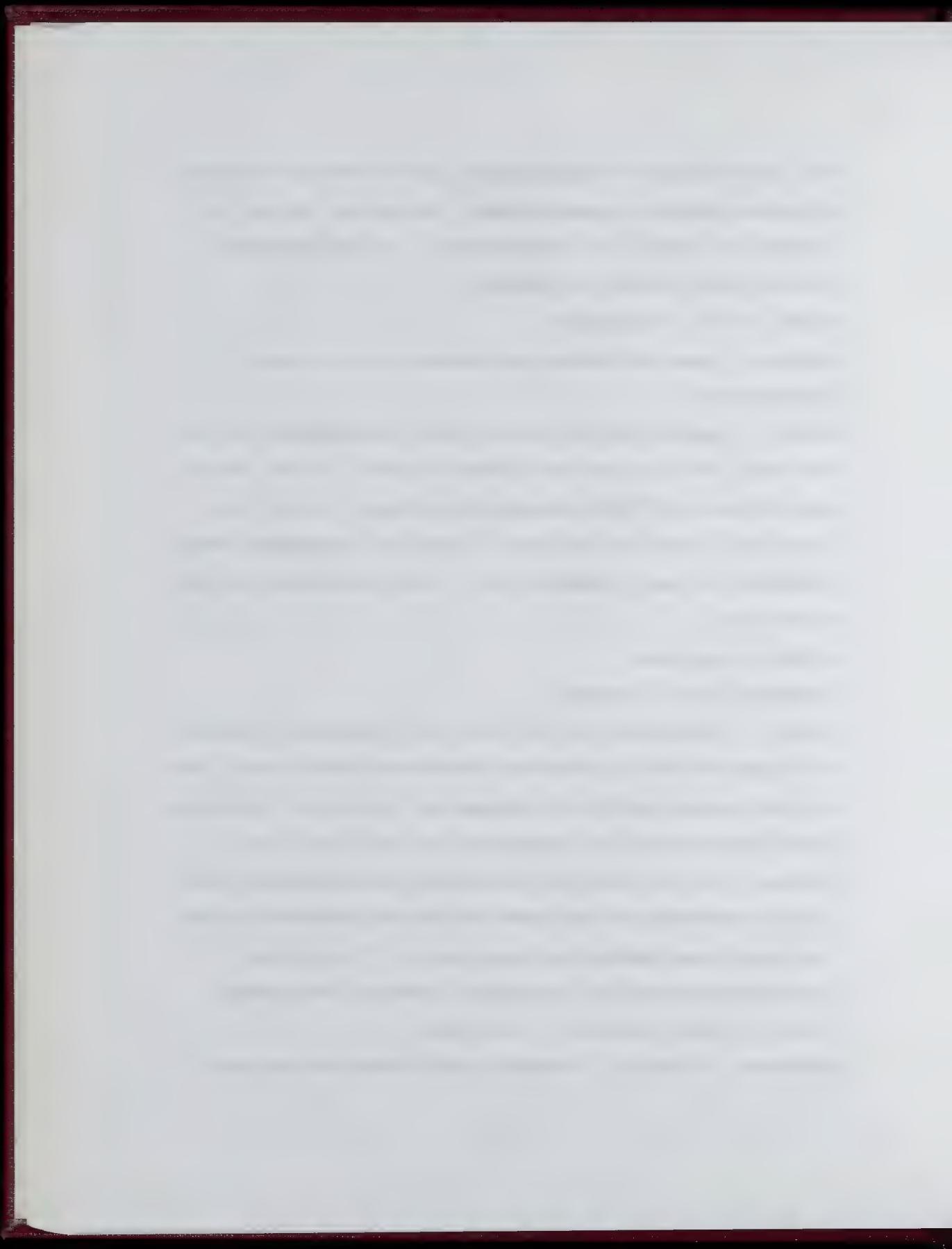
HERRMANN: It was, probably, yes. Much stress was laid on German art.

SMITH: There was?

HERRMANN: Yeah, I think.

SMITH: It seems also at the time that there was a stress on trying to find the national characteristics of art. You do that in your article on Weingarten, where you talk about German and Austrian art separating at the time of the baroque. And you said the distinction between German and Italian architecture was based on Italian concentration on form and German concentration on space. The national characteristics of art, was that a question that people wanted to have answered at that time?

HERRMANN: Probably. I thought that interested me and I



thought that was something new. I gave an example.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: And that was really the main gist of that article.

SMITH: Did you meet [Nikolaus] Pevsner while you were at Leipzig?

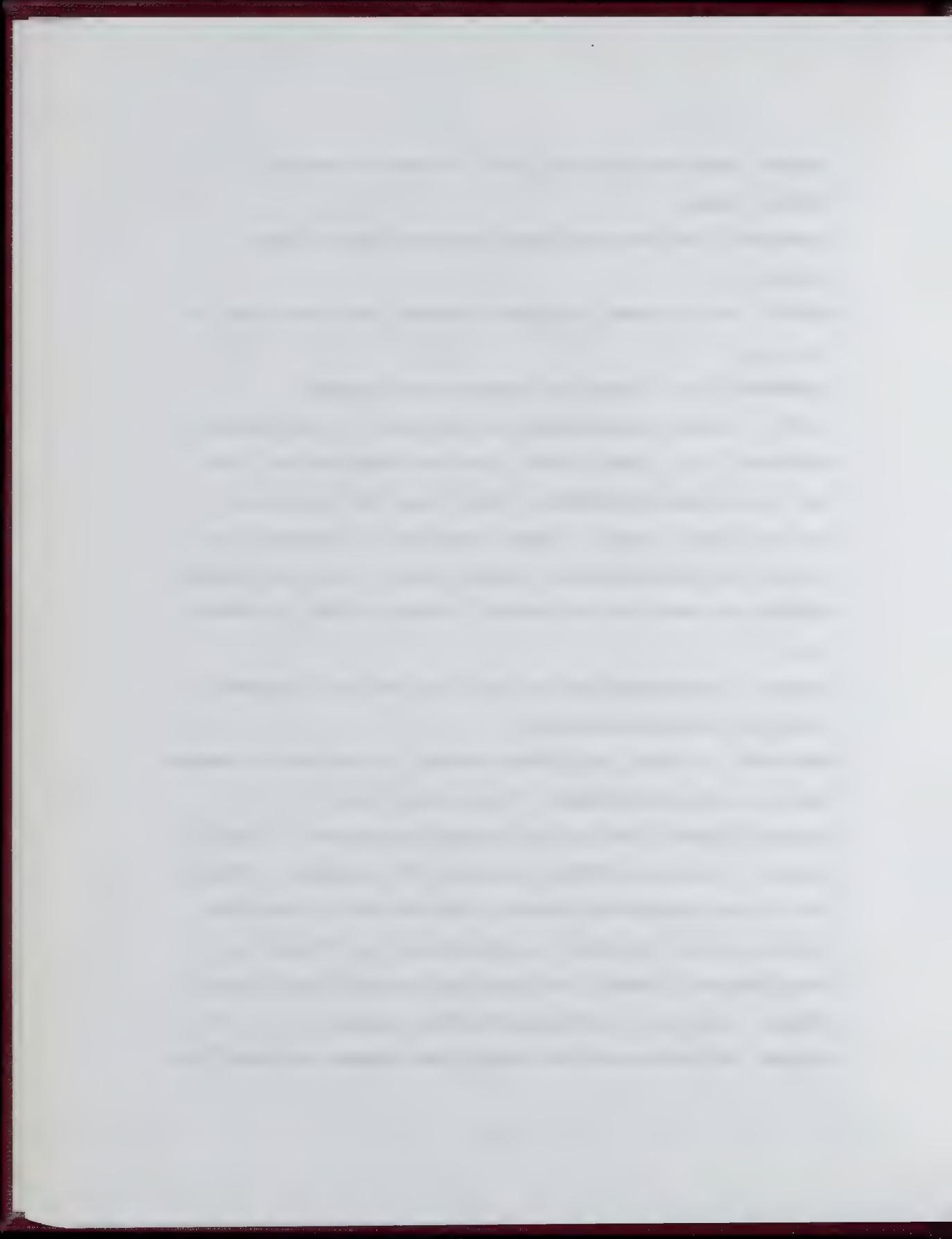
HERRMANN: Yes, I knew him, knew him quite well.

SMITH: He was studying what at the time? Do you recall?

HERRMANN: Oh, I don't know. You must know better. No, I don't know what he studied. But I knew him quite well. I met him, then, later. I again knew him in England. He came to Berlin to see me. We got on well with each other, although we were very different. He was a very different man.

SMITH: I was wondering, at what time did your interest in modern architecture develop?

HERRMANN: I think, to a great extent, it was when I became keeper in the art library. This [Staatliche] Kunstabibliothek [Berlin] was closely connected to the art school. Originally Peter Jessen was the director. There was a close connection between [the art school] and the library, even literally a close connection. There was a door from the library, you could go straight into the art school. And then the Kunstabibliothek became part of the museum. So the connection wasn't that close any more. But



there was the tradition that modern art was also a subject. Then we had exhibitions. And there I think my interest in modern architecture started. In addition to it, [Kurt] Glaser had a circle every Monday--I think--of people, where amongst others was [Karl] Scheffler. And somehow Scheffler asked me to write articles about modern buildings. That's when it started. The next step was that [Wilhelm] Waetzoldt asked me to write that book about the nineteenth and twentieth century, and that went right through to the Bauhaus. So that developed in that way.

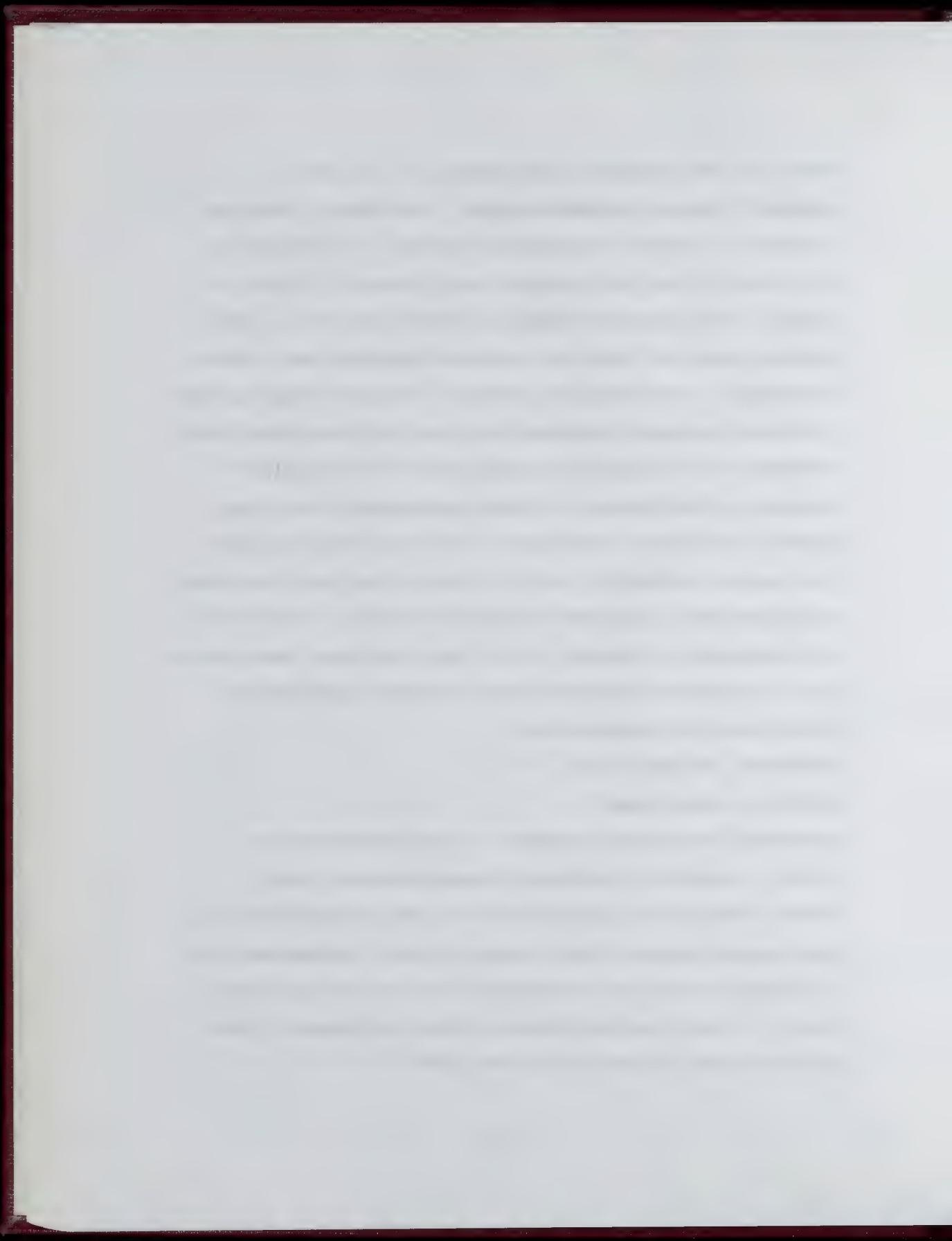
SMITH: Next time I think we'll talk about the book and your period in Berlin. But I'd like to ask you a few more questions about your art historical training. One is if-- I'm wondering if anybody, any of your teachers, were asking what I would call "form follows function" questions in relationship to architecture.

HERRMANN: At that time?

SMITH: At that time.

HERRMANN: Not that I remember. I will keep that in mind. [laughter] Sometimes things come back, but--

SMITH: There is a glimmer of it in your dissertation, but you largely discuss form in and of itself, independent of the function that it accompanies. But we will get into that. I also-- Was art history linked to museums? Were you sent into museums to look at work?



HERRMANN: Well, I started-- After I finished university, I tried to get a job. And there were two or three attempts. One was Hamburg, another was Lübeck. Then, I don't quite know how it happened, I was accepted as a volunteer in the museum, and I started.

SMITH: At the [Staatliches] Kunstgewerbemuseum [Berlin]?

HERRMANN: Kunstgewerbemuseum. And a famous man-- That was in the palace, in the Schlueterschloss, which doesn't exist anymore. After the revolution this was taken over by the state and the Kunstgewerbemuseum. I had his Majesty's bathroom, which was a beautiful affair--the bath. And worked under that man [Otto von Falke]. And he became a Nazi. He was a famous man. He was the director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum. And there I worked, started my career. From there I got then the job in the

Kunstbibliothek. But in the museum only that short time.

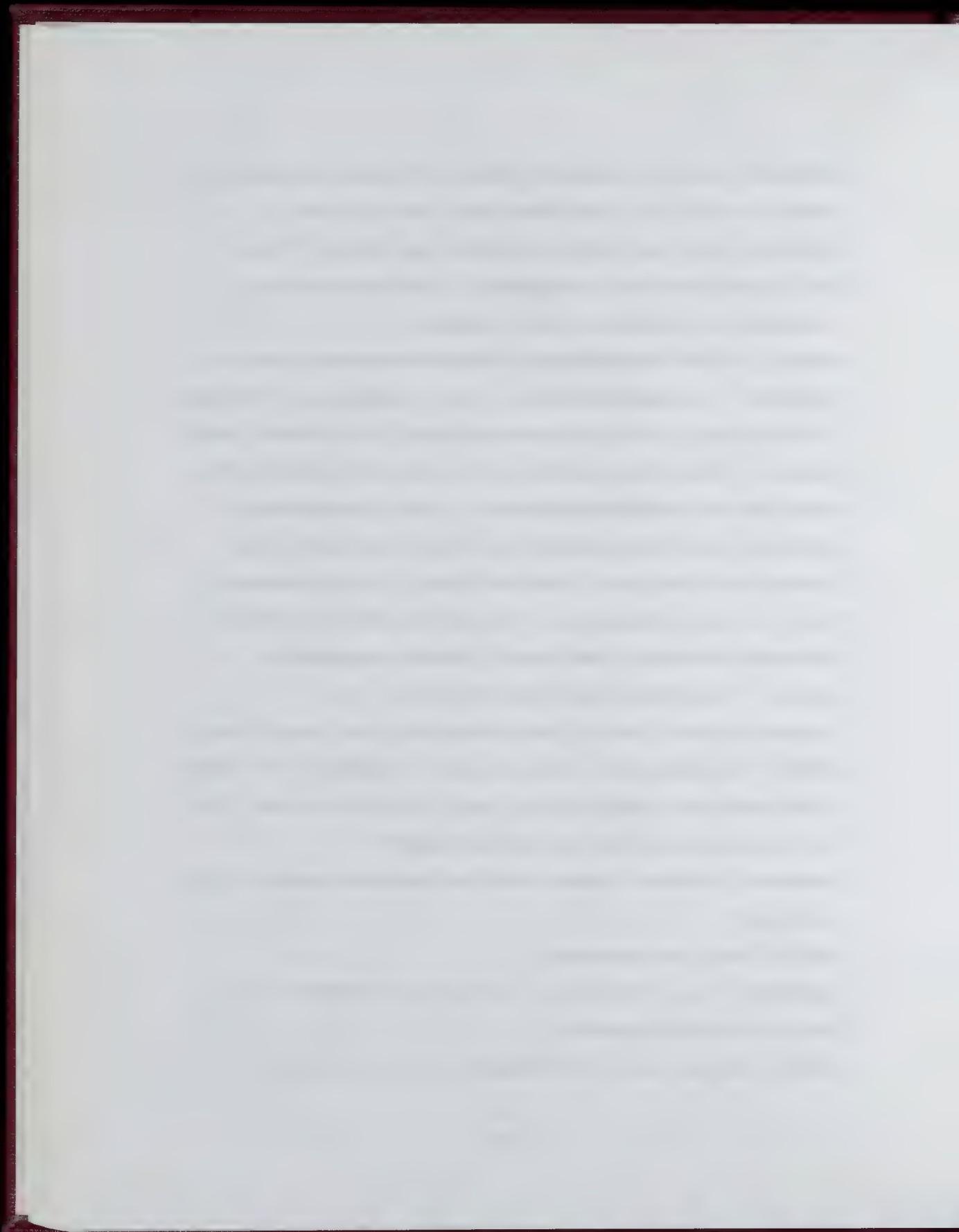
SMITH: But what about when you were a student? Did Pinder or Goldschmidt or Wölfflin or [Hans] Hildebrandt say, "Go to the museum and look at such and such"?

HERRMANN: Whether we went into the museum as part of our training?

SMITH: Yes. As students.

HERRMANN: Yes, I think so. As far as I remember, on my own or with other people.

SMITH: On your own, of course, but would you mount



exhibitions as part of class work?

HERRMANN: No. Not at that time. Not at the Kunstgewerbemuseum. There I was on the lowest grade. But later at the Kunstabibliothek, yes. Quite a number.

SMITH: What about the relationship between academics and contemporary artists? Was there much crossover?

HERRMANN: Later yes. All that happened at the Kunstabibliothek under Glaser, which sounds very exciting, but I warned you that I have not very much to say about it. [laughter]

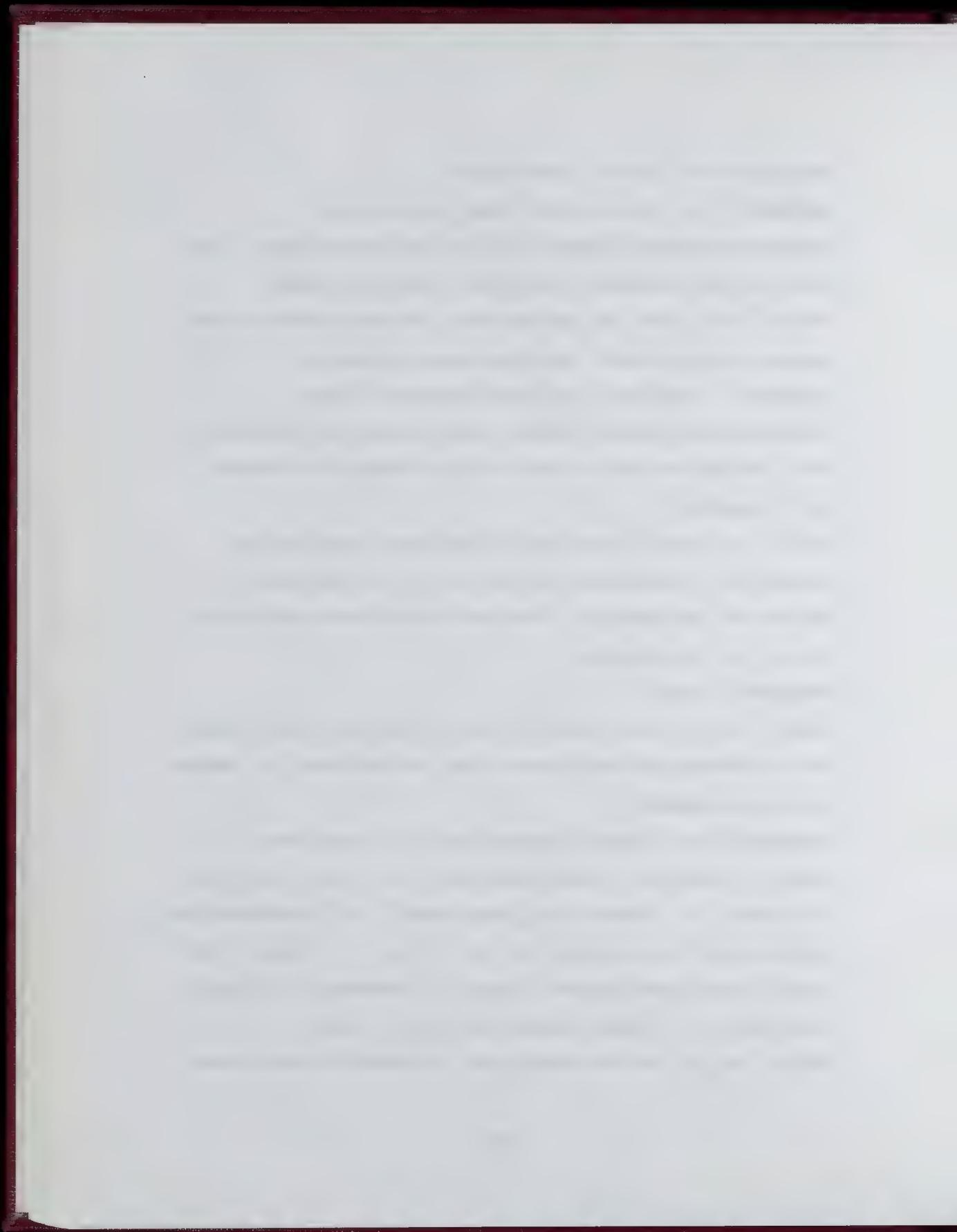
SMITH: You know, one of the things that struck me as I opened your dissertation to look at it was the first chapter on the Escorial. The decision to have your first chapter on the Escorial.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: How did you arrive at that? What led you to look at the Escorial as the ground plan, or the basis, of German baroque cloisters?

HERRMANN: Well, this is basic, and it is important. I like to think that I just found that out. But I can't be sure about it. Others must judge that. If I connected the Escorial with the baroque, if that is my-- It doesn't show that in the dissertation? I mean, if somebody else would have said it, I surely should have made a note.

SMITH: No, it did not seem to be footnoted in that sense.



HERRMANN: If I didn't, then it comes from me, which is very good! [laughter]

SMITH: So did you go to the Escorial?

HERRMANN: No. Isn't that-- I went to Spain once. I was in Madrid. And then the weather was so terrible I didn't get there, to my great sorrow. Other people now, friends of mine, went there and were enormously impressed, and I missed that. No, I never saw it.

SMITH: Perhaps you could-- I know it might be difficult for you to talk about, since it has been so many years and you haven't read it. But you divide your book up into two main parts, "Die Grundrissentwicklung" and "Die Aufbauentwicklung." What was the rationale for that intellectual structure?

HERRMANN: I divided these. Did I not connect them at all?

SMITH: Oh, you connect them.

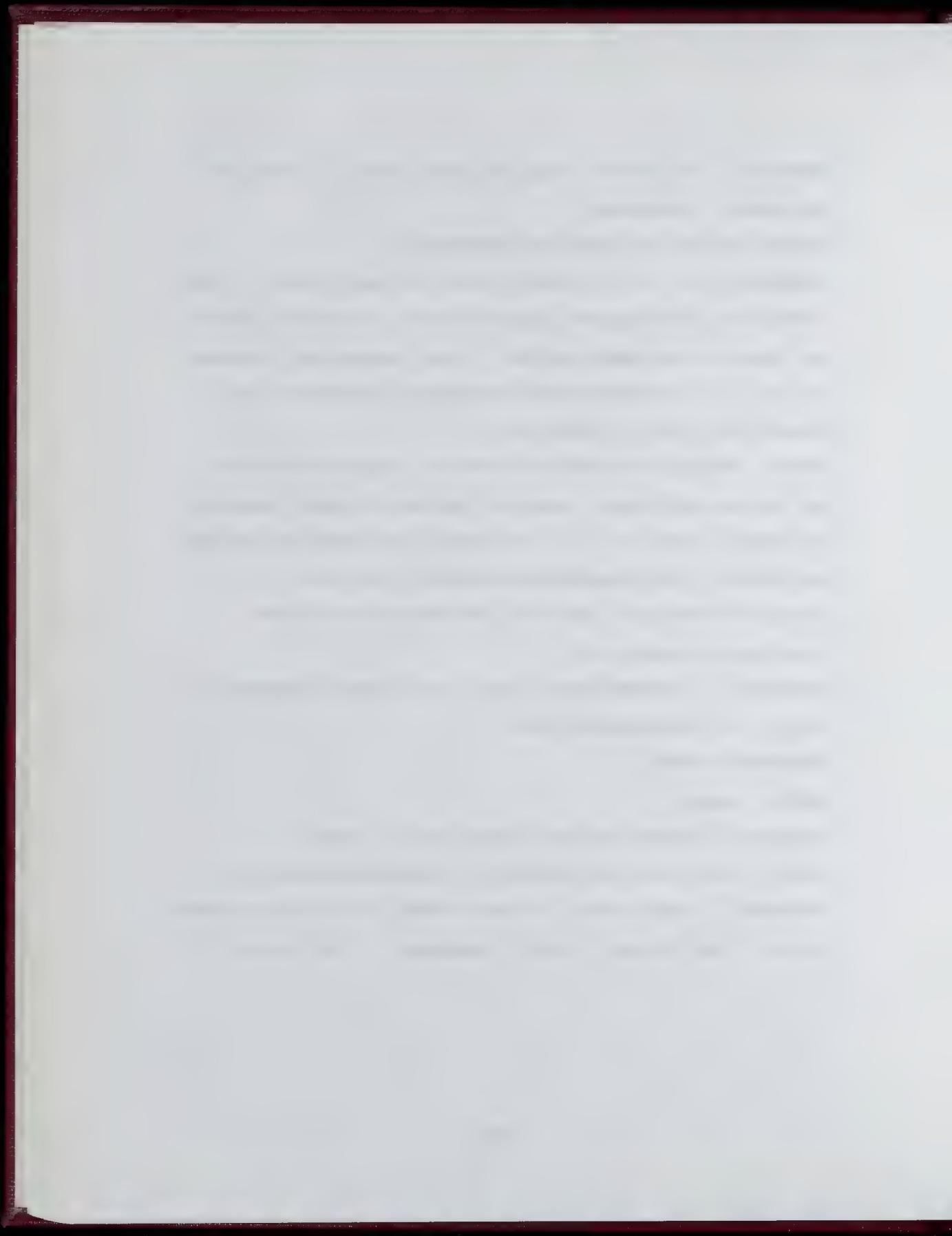
HERRMANN: Yeah?

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: So what is the--? How I got to that?

SMITH: Yeah, the significance of that division for you.

HERRMANN: I don't know. I don't know. Why or how I came to it, I don't know. I don't remember. I don't know.



TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 9, 1990

SMITH: I had a couple of follow-up questions from the last time we were talking. You had mentioned that you had gone to see Ernst Cassirer to discuss your dissertation and that the Cassirers and your family were friends.

HERRMANN: Interrelated, yeah.

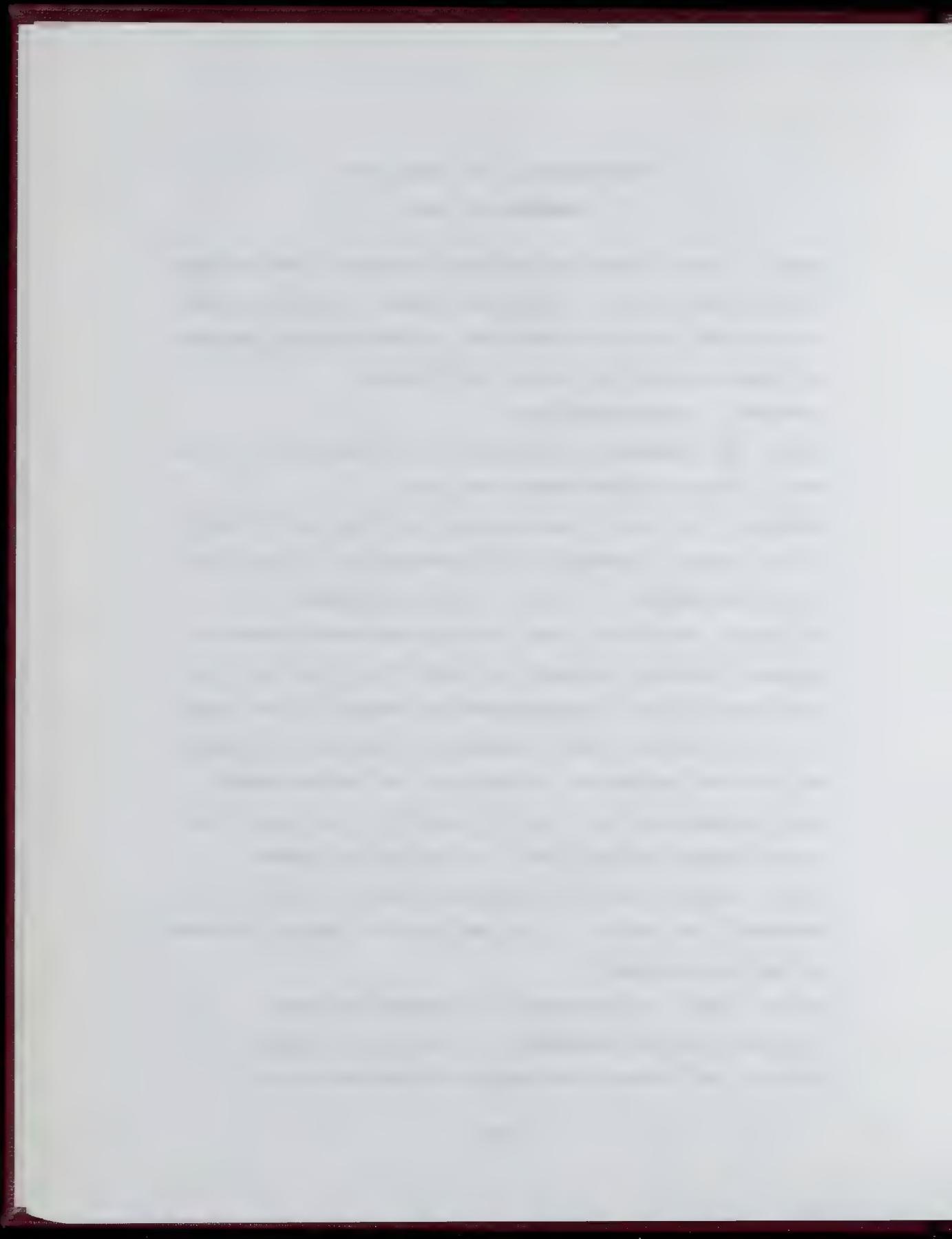
SMITH: How frequently did you see Ernst Cassirer? Did you have an ongoing relationship with him?

HERRMANN: No. No. I saw him only one time, and I think it was before I started on the dissertation. It was just that I had started. I went to Freiburg to study philosophy, and when I came to Berlin my father [Richard Herrmann] probably arranged that with Ernst Cassirer. He just wanted to hear from him what he thought of this young man. So I wouldn't have discussed it. He must have asked me questions and got an impression of me, and he made a deep impression on me. He was a wonderful person and was famous already at that time. But he was very modest.

SMITH: Did you follow his books as they came out?

HERRMANN: Not really. A bit yes, but not really. So that is just one meeting.

SMITH: Yeah. His approach to philosophy is quite different from phenomenology. Do you have a greater affinity for a kind of an empiricist approach to--?



HERRMANN: If--and these are not memories now, but just a reasonable deduction--he talked about his philosophy, or about philosophy in general that would be in his direction and that was away from phenomenology, then I certainly would feel closer to him. Because phenomenology I simply didn't grasp.

SMITH: I understand that Cassirer had a fair amount of influence on [Erwin] Panofsky. Did you know Panofsky?

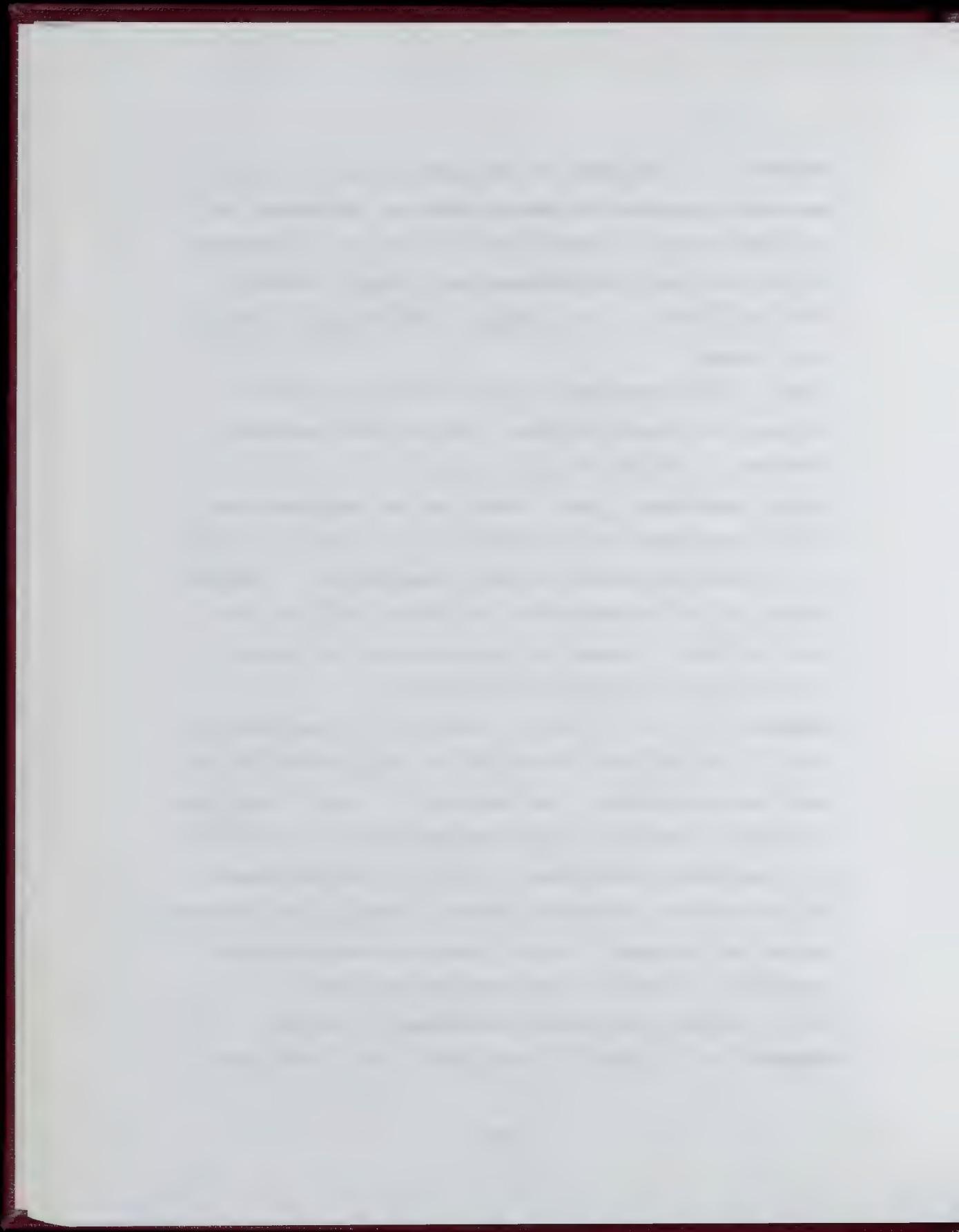
HERRMANN: I met him, but much later.

SMITH: Much later. Okay. Also, you had mentioned that [Paul] Frankl had-- Not influenced, but you had found some of his ideas very useful for your dissertation. I believe that he was at [the University of] Munich while you were there, in 1921. He went to [the University of] Halle in 1922. Did you take any classes from him?

HERRMANN: No. No. I went to Halle after I had passed my Ph.D. I went to Halle to see him and really hoped that he would publish the Ph.D. But he didn't. I don't think as a criticism to the Ph.D., but rather because this was still at a time when printing was a difficult thing in Germany. This dissertation would have normally been printed in a few copies, but it never-- At that time inflation was quite impossible, so there is only that one copy left.

SMITH: Did you know Richard Krautheimer in Munich?

HERRMANN: No, I think-- I don't know, but it must have



been Berlin. I met him much later in New York at Columbia [University]. And the way he greeted me, we must have been very well known to each other. [laughter] That I remember. This was twenty years later. So was it Berlin? Yeah.

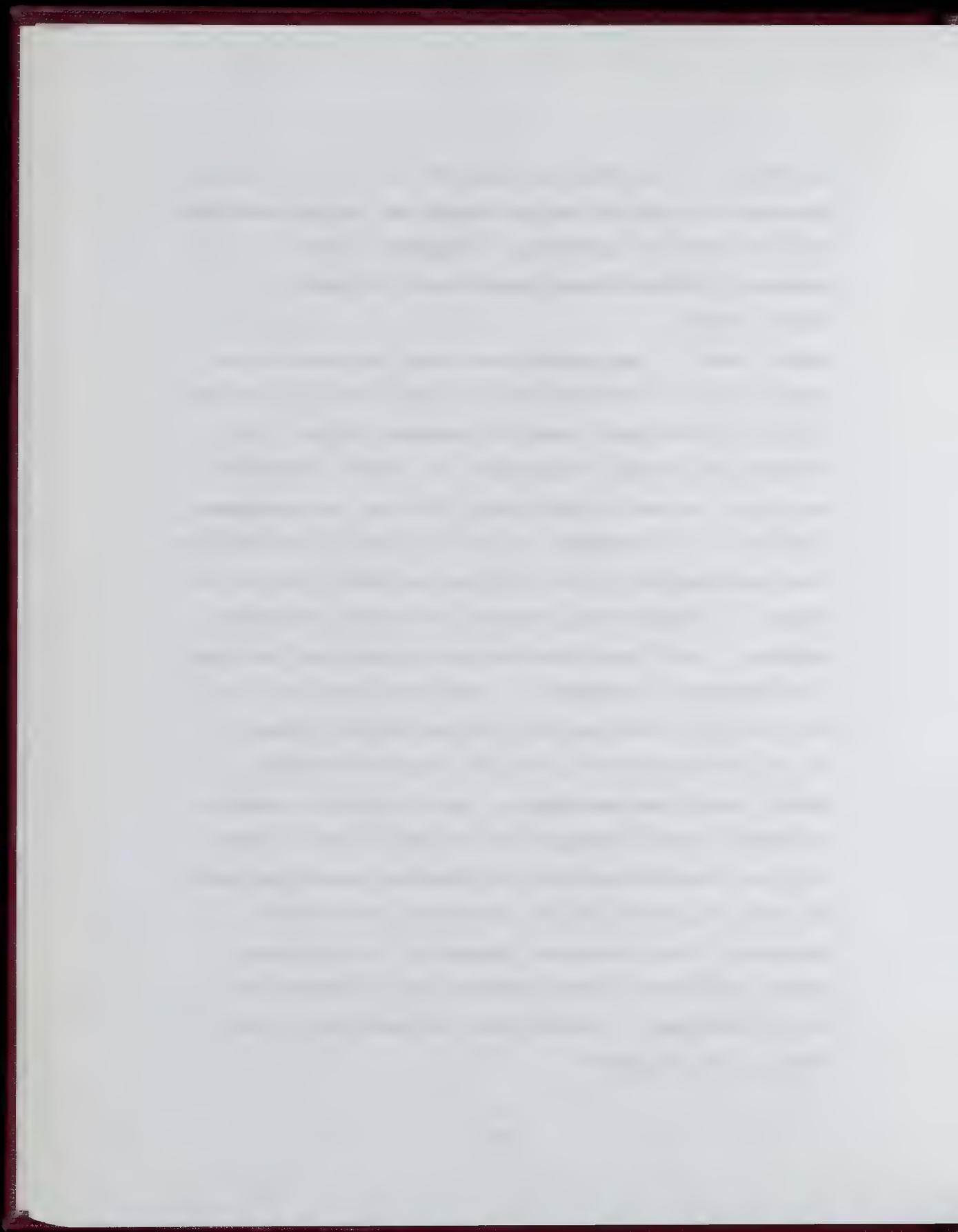
SMITH: Yeah. I was reading last night portions of the transcript of an interview that was done with him. He had, I think, in some ways, parallel responses to you. He studied with [Adolph] Goldschmidt, but found Goldschmidt too rigid. He went to [Heinrich] Wölfflin, was impressed by Wölfflin as a lecturer, but did not really feel that the ideas were helpful to him. So then he finally settled on Frankl. In terms of the students in the early twenties--

HERRMANN: Then I must have met him in Berlin at that time if he was with Goldschmidt. I must have known him quite well, but it's mixed up with the time he was at Rome. I met him at Rome later on, and then again at Columbia.

SMITH: What I was wondering is, was there--in a sense--a revolution going on amongst art history students? That they were dissatisfied with the preceding generation, with the great figures in the art historical profession?

HERRMANN: I don't remember, actually. I don't know.

SMITH: What about--? One person we didn't mention was Dehio, Georg Dehio. Did his work influence you at all? Did you find it useful?



HERRMANN: Yes. Oh, yes. Very much. I didn't meet him, didn't hear him. But, of course, Dehio was the standard guidebook. The way he simply described was very useful.

SMITH: Yeah. I was also wondering, in your dissertation how much archival research did you do?

HERRMANN: Archives, monastic archives. Quite a bit in Bavaria. Partly these monasteries didn't exist as monasteries anymore, but were lunatic asylums. Which was not so pleasant.

SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: I remember that. But I worked in archives there, too.

SMITH: I asked that because Krautheimer says he did no archival research and that it wasn't expected at the time.

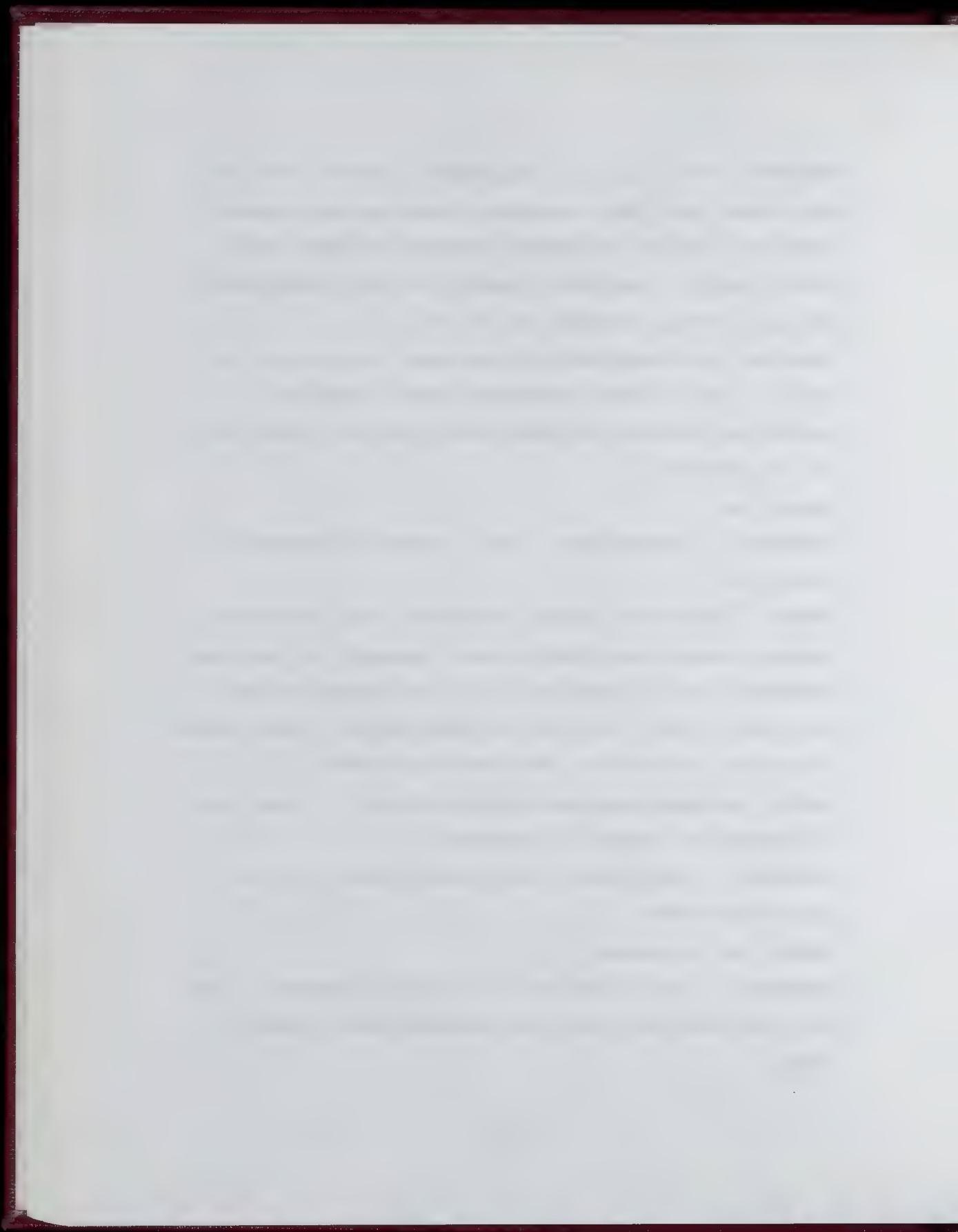
HERRMANN: That is quite possible. The change obviously came after I left. But for the dissertation, I also worked in archives in Munich in the Staatsbibliothek.

SMITH: Did this come from [Wilhelm] Pinder? I mean, was he pushing you to work in archives?

HERRMANN: I don't know, I don't really know. No, he wasn't there then.

SMITH: Oh, in Munich.

HERRMANN: It was in Munich. In Leipzig I couldn't. The work must have been fairly far advanced when I came to Pinder.



SMITH: While you were a student, were you involved in the Wandervogel movement at all?

HERRMANN: As a boy I was. But when I was in my teens-- fourteen or fifteen--in Berlin, I joined the Wandervogel. That was a good-- It had its good sides. But it can't have been more than a couple of years or so, I suppose.

SMITH: One last question on Pinder. Was there ever any indication of anti-Semitism from him?

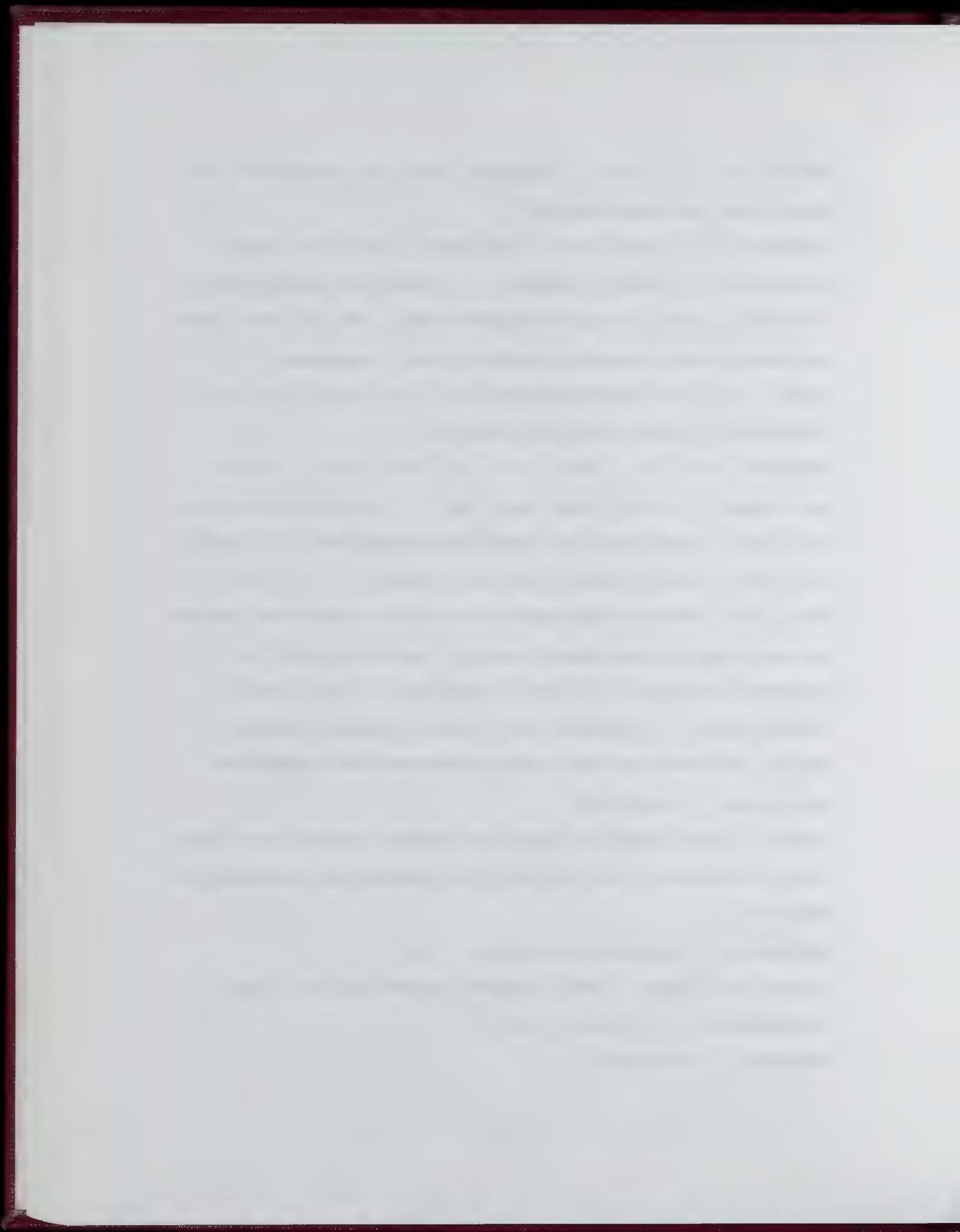
HERRMANN: No. No. But I told you last time, I wasn't very aware. I didn't feel as a Jew. A friend of mine, who was a Jew, would have been much more sensitive to it than I was. But I don't think he was anti-Semitic. The only thing is--I think I mentioned it--that he knew I was Jewish and that when he recommended me to [Max] Sauerland, he mentioned Schwerin, but didn't say that it was a town in Jewish Posen. It implied that I was a hundred percent Aryan. So there may have been protective anti-Semitism, I don't know. [laughter]

SMITH: I guess what we could call German chauvinism-- Were there indications that he felt that Germany was superior to France?

HERRMANN: I have no recollection. No.

SMITH: No? Okay. Then I wanted to move on to-- You graduated in, I believe, 1925.

HERRMANN: If you say it.



SMITH: Well, I believe. I am not-- When you graduated, what did you want to do as a career? And did you expect that you could be a professional art historian? Was that a reasonable expectation?

HERRMANN: Yes. Yes. That was definitely my aim. And I tried several ways, through Pinder. He recommended me to some people, whom I saw. When I joined the [Staatliches] Kunstmuseum [Berlin].

SMITH: In 1925 it was--

HERRMANN: That same year. So there are a few months in between. I certainly wanted to take up that profession.

SMITH: Now, what were your duties at the Kunstgewerbe-museum?

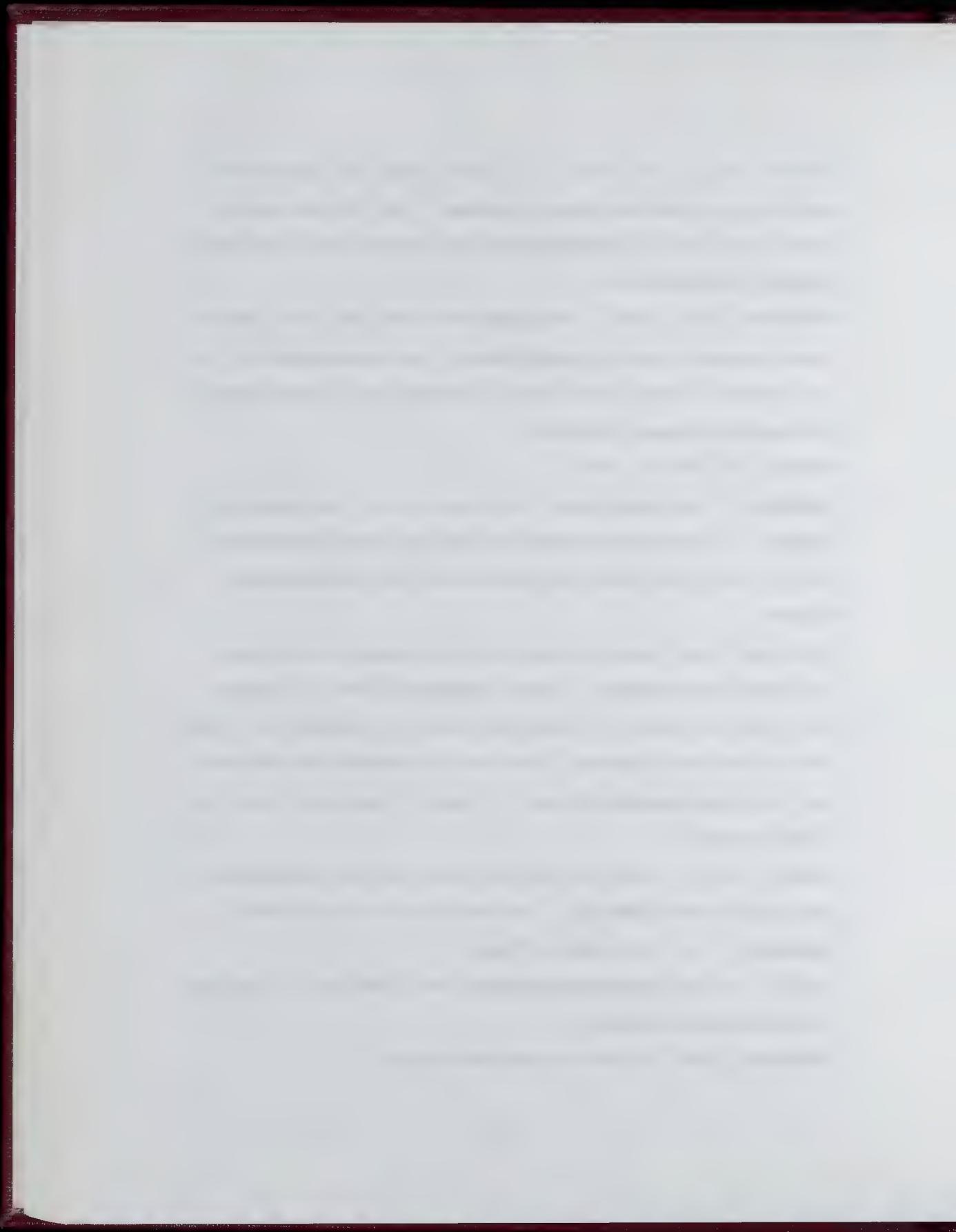
HERRMANN: One thing, I tried to make myself conversant with the whole museum. I was completely left on my own. As at the university, there was nobody who guided me. They didn't take much notice. And then I probably had to do a few jobs rearranging things. I think I was only there for a few months.

SMITH: Well, I have in 1927 you went to the [Staatliche] Kunstmuseum [Berlin]. So that would be two years.

HERRMANN: In '25 I went to the--

SMITH: To the Kunstgewerbemuseum, and then in '27 you went to the Kunstmuseum.

HERRMANN: But it doesn't give the month?



SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: So it could be perhaps not much more than a year. I don't think it was that long. About a year.

SMITH: So you mentioned the other time that you started there as a volunteer. Did you actually ever have a paying job there?

HERRMANN: No. No. That started with the Kunstabibliothek.

SMITH: Okay. Well, let's move on to the Kunstabibliothek. How did you get the job there?

HERRMANN: Through [Kurt] Glaser. Glaser must have accepted me. Probably the position was open and I applied and saw Glaser and Glaser accepted me. And I got good contact with Glaser.

SMITH: Through family connections? Or professional?

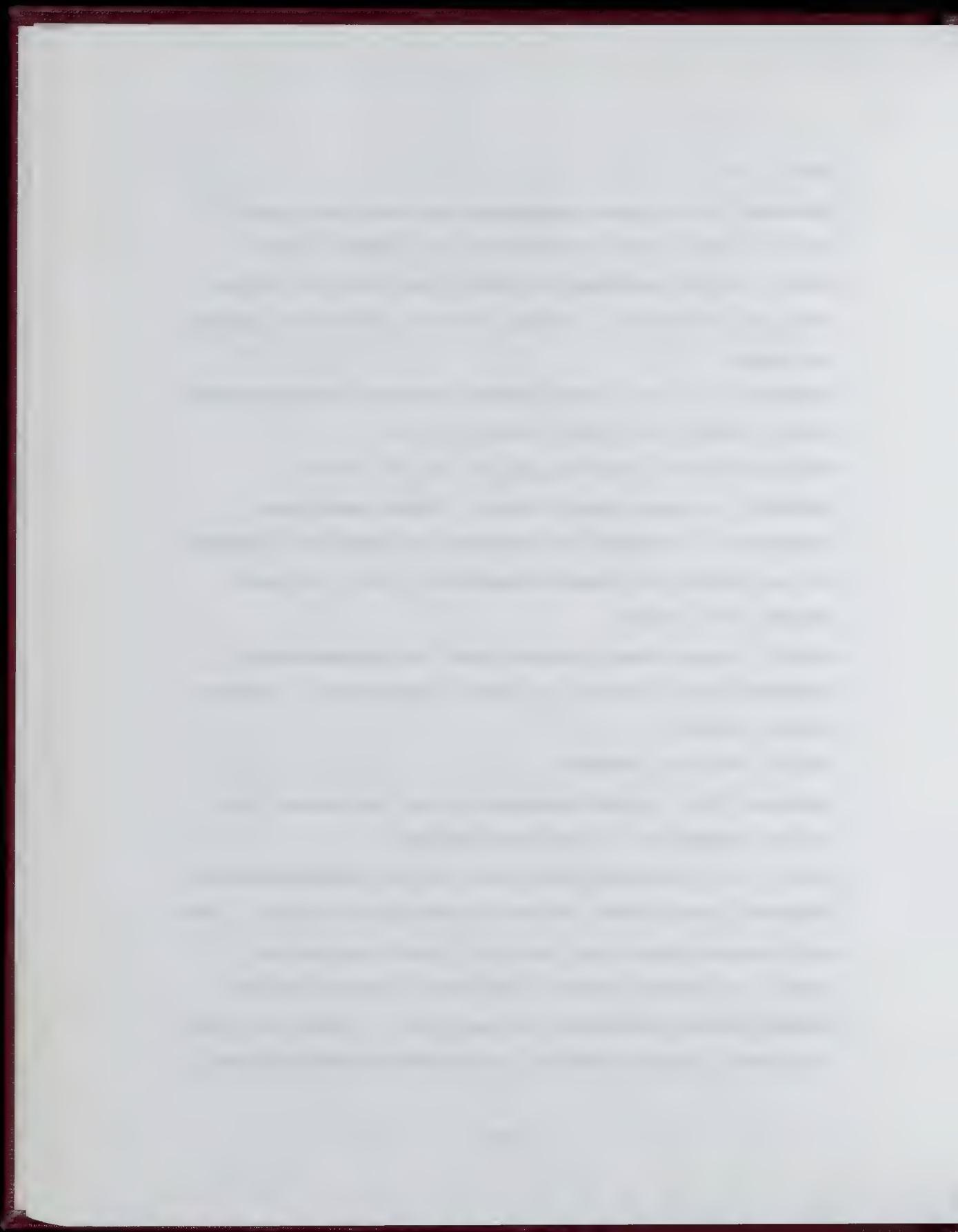
HERRMANN: No, I didn't. No family connections. Nothing much of contact.

SMITH: Via, say, Pinder?

HERRMANN: No. I think probably within the museum, this job was offered and I must have applied.

SMITH: Now, what were your duties at the Kunstabibliothek?

HERRMANN: What I did? We had a drawing collection, a very good drawing collection, and that I must have put in order. For quite a while. And also allocated that to certain artists and wrote the name down. Twenty-five years later when I came to Berlin, to the then Kunstabibliothek, I



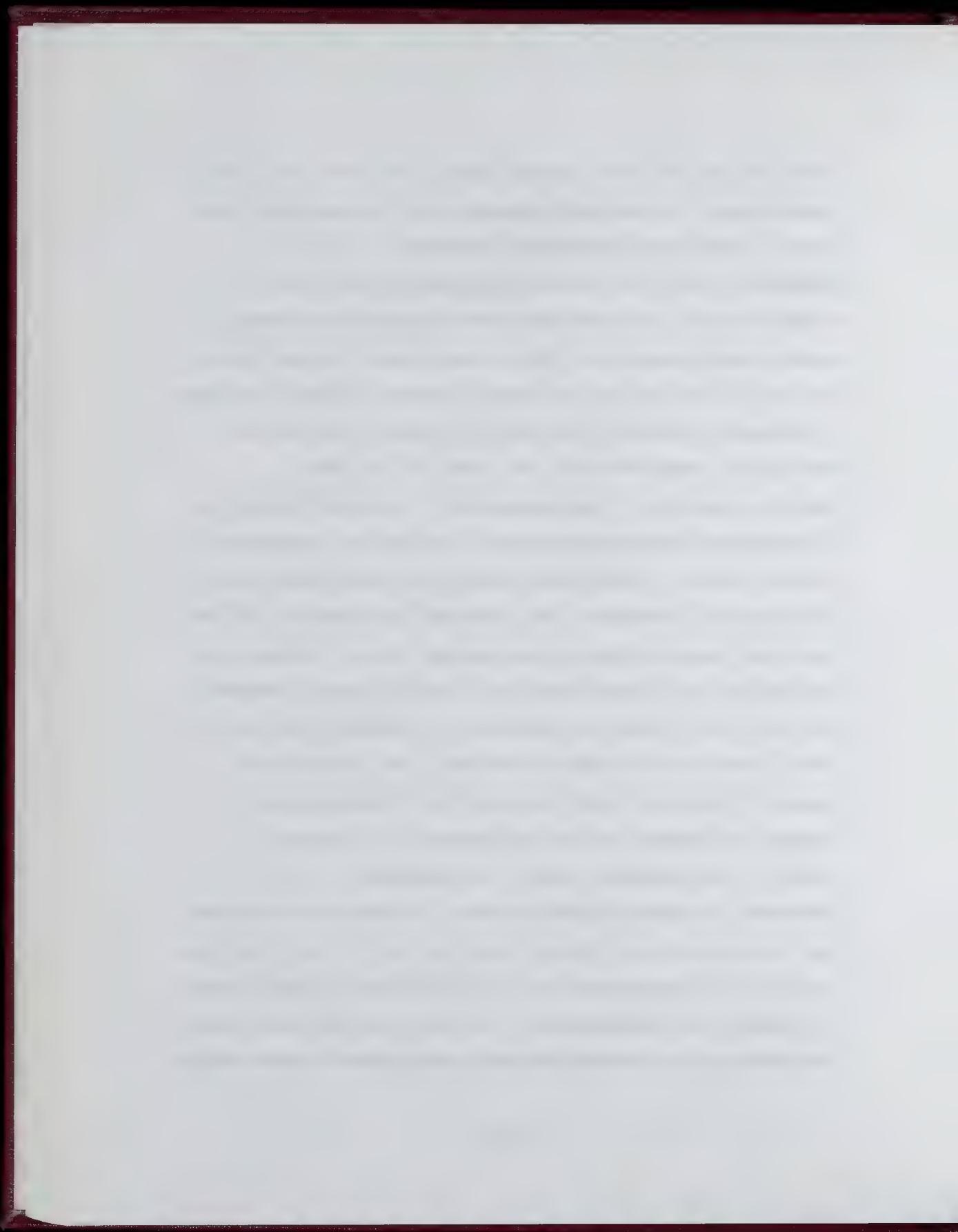
asked for one of these drawing boxes, and that was in my handwriting. It was quite uncanny that it was still there.

SMITH: These were old master drawings?

HERRMANN: Yeah. Of course, Kunstgewerbe were mainly ornamental or-- And then they had a graphic department, which I also worked in. Then at one time-- It was quite a lot to do, and then at one time I thought of trying to work on triumphal arches. They had also quite a collection. But nothing came of that. But then I-- Oh, yes. I started, really-- I just remembered. I started really not at the actual drawing collection, but at the Lipperheide costume library. They had a section of historical library on historical costumes. The name was Lipperheide. It was very well known and was on the ground floor. It had a man who ran it, and I was under him. That's where I started, and he tried to make me interested in costumes and work on that. That's how it really started. And then to his great-- I think he never got over it. I moved up and became, not keeper, but it was something in between.

SMITH: Like assistant keeper, or something.

HERRMANN: Something like it, yeah. I moved up to Glaser, and he stayed there. Glaser took me, and I think there was just a lot of understanding. My attitudes, liberal Jewish attitudes, are intellectual. And the other one downstairs was completely different and was there before Glaser became



director. And this man became a Nazi.

SMITH: Oh.

HERRMANN: And he had some reason for it. [laughter]

SMITH: Well, he thought he had a reason.

HERRMANN: That I had quite forgot. Then I moved up; then I started to work there. Glaser's second-in-command, [Karl] Koch, was a man mainly on Cranach and Holbein. And I worked under him.

SMITH: Were you involved in acquisitions?

HERRMANN: Books, I remember. I went to auctions and bought books.

SMITH: Did you have a decent budget for what you were doing?

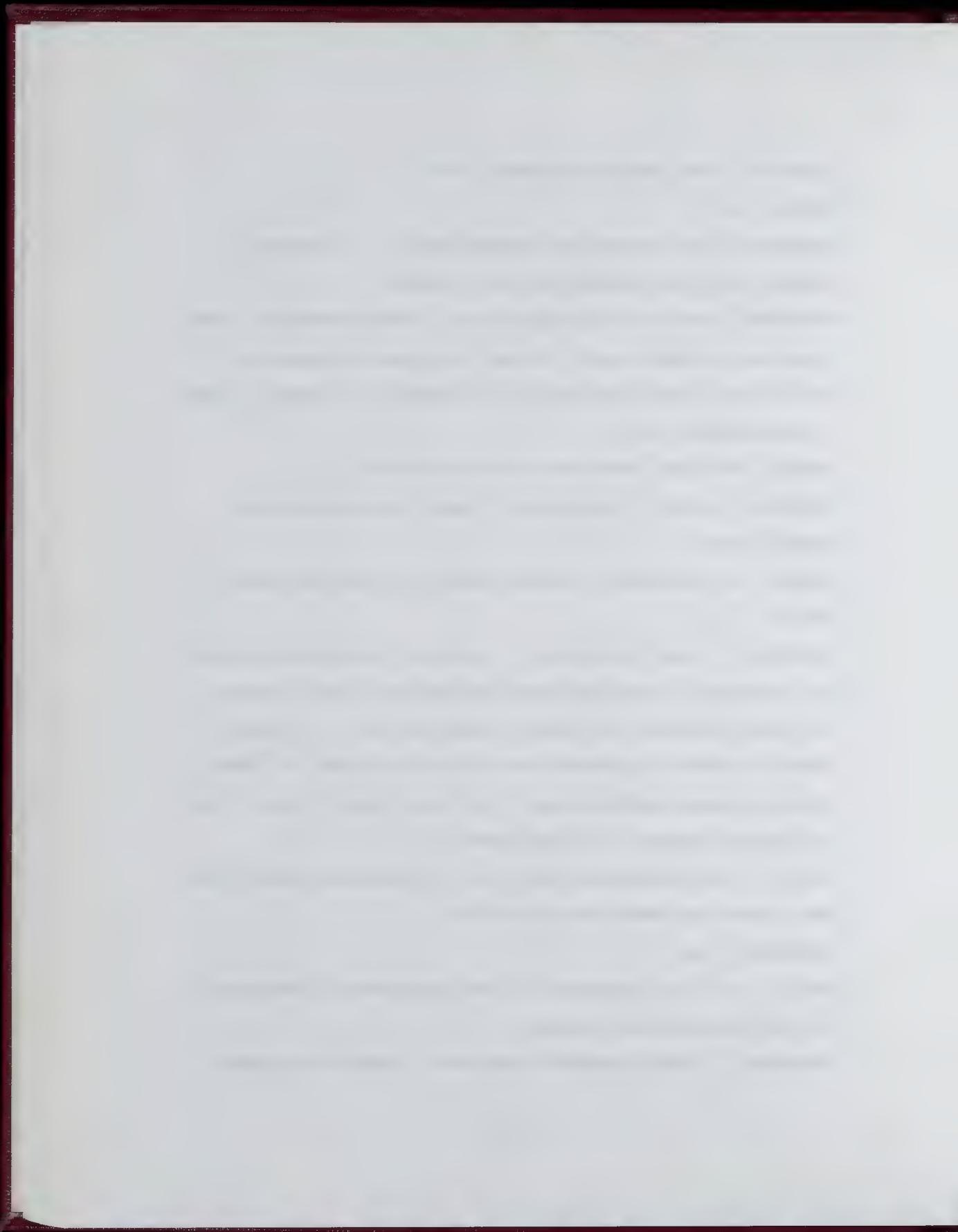
HERRMANN: I can't even say. I was not concerned, or did not know much, about the needs and means of the library. I just went through the auction catalogs, and if I found anything useful I probably told Glaser or Koch, "I think this is a good book to have." And they said, "Okay." But the budget side of it I was never--

SMITH: I was wondering what kind of cataloging system did you-- Were you involved with the--?

HERRMANN: Yes, I--

SMITH: Let's say compared to the [Biblioteca] Herziana and the questions of access.

HERRMANN: I only remember that when I knew the system-- I



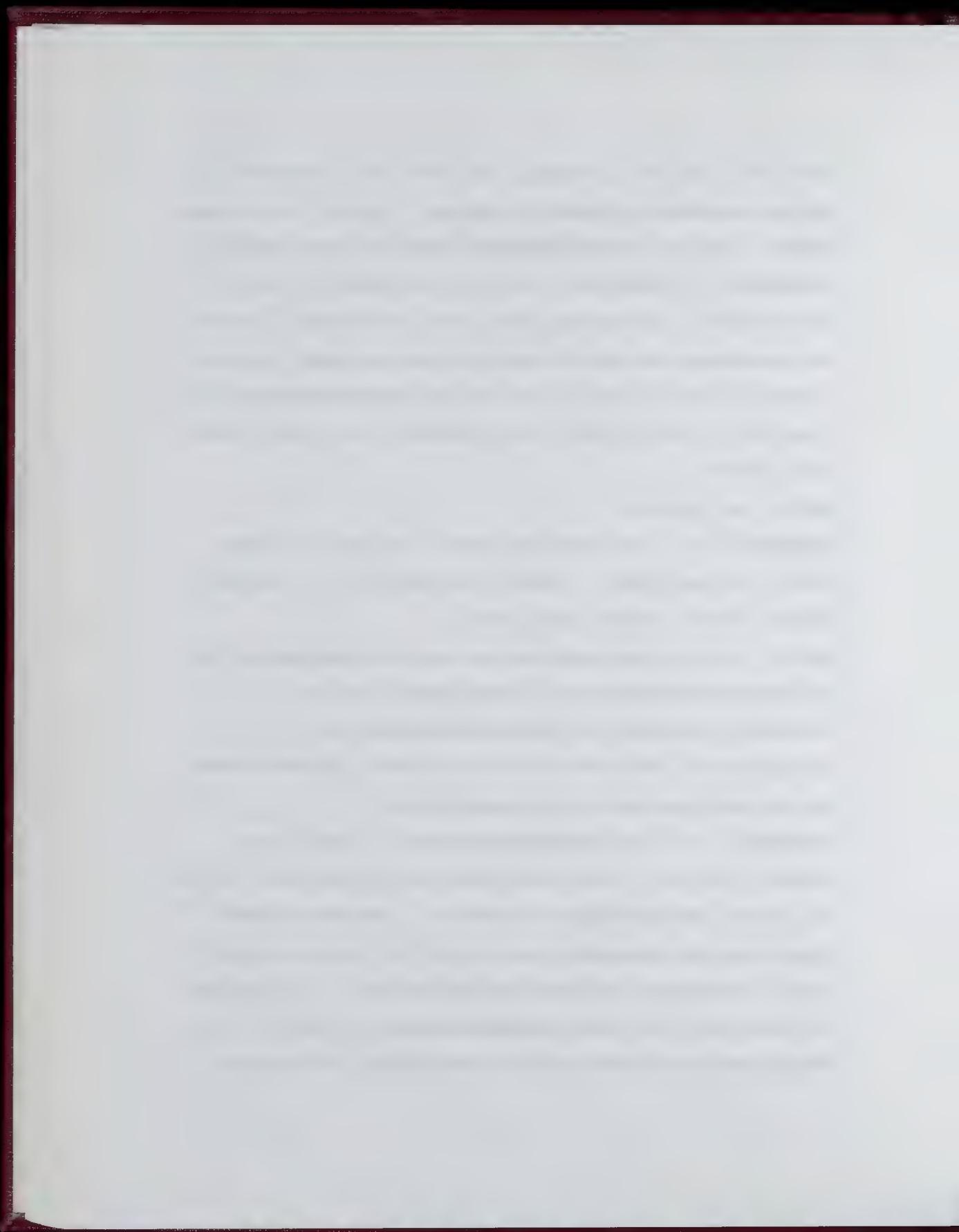
don't know what it is called, the RIBA [Royal Institute of British Architects] library's system. I think it's a crazy system. The one at the Kunstabibliothek was much easier to understand. I know that I was critical about it, but I don't think I had any say in it. The only thing I had to do immediately was to give up my Gothic writing. I wrote in Gothic letters until I came to the Kunstabibliothek. So I was fairly old by then, twenty-eight or so. Until then I wrote Gothic.

SMITH: Oh, really?

HERRMANN: Yes. And then they said, "You can't do that here. You must try." I had to get used to it. And, of course, after a short time I was.

SMITH: You had mentioned when we were talking before that the Völkerkundemuseum was "conservative" and the Kunstabibliothek and the Kunstgewerbemuseum were "progressive." What did you mean by that? In what sense do you mean progressive or conservative?

HERRMANN: Well, the Kunstgewerbemuseum, I don't know whether that was. [Otto von] Falke was the man on-- And he was little concerned about modern art. Whereas Glaser, right from the beginning, considered the Kunstabibliothek part of the modern art/architecture movement. In that way my connection with the Kunstabibliothek was as a-- The Kunstgewerbemuseum had a big ground floor-- You haven't



been there?

SMITH: No, I haven't.

HERRMANN: They restored it. The [Martin] Gropius building was built by the uncle of the [Walter] Gropius, and it's a very good building of 1860 or so. It was gutted in the war and they rebuilt it now. And it has a big courtyard. And that courtyard, with a big hall--the whole building, that belonged to us--the Kunstabibliothek [used] for exhibitions. So that was my contact. The other contact with them and the-- If I said progressive or conservative, it referred to Glaser on one side and Falke on the other. I was close with two people about that. One was William Cohn. He was an orientalist. And the other was Leopold Reidemeister, who was a nephew of [Wilhelm von] Bode, and he specialized in Chinese art. And Reidemeister was also in Munich. I knew him from Munich. He was really a friend of mine. At one time--I don't know whether it is of any interest--as he was a nephew of Bode-- When I entered the service, I remember, Bode was still director, and I had to see him, which was frightening. Reidemeister, being a nephew of him, had certain privileges. As his home was not in Berlin, he had to live in digs, but through this connection he got an apartment in the park. There was a little eighteenth-century, probably [Carl Friedrich] Schinkel, building. And there he got rooms. Then he one



time went away on a tour, China or wherever, and he offered me to live there. So I lived there for some time. And that was a beautiful apartment in the middle of the park.

SMITH: That sounds nice.

HERRMANN: So that is Reidemeister.

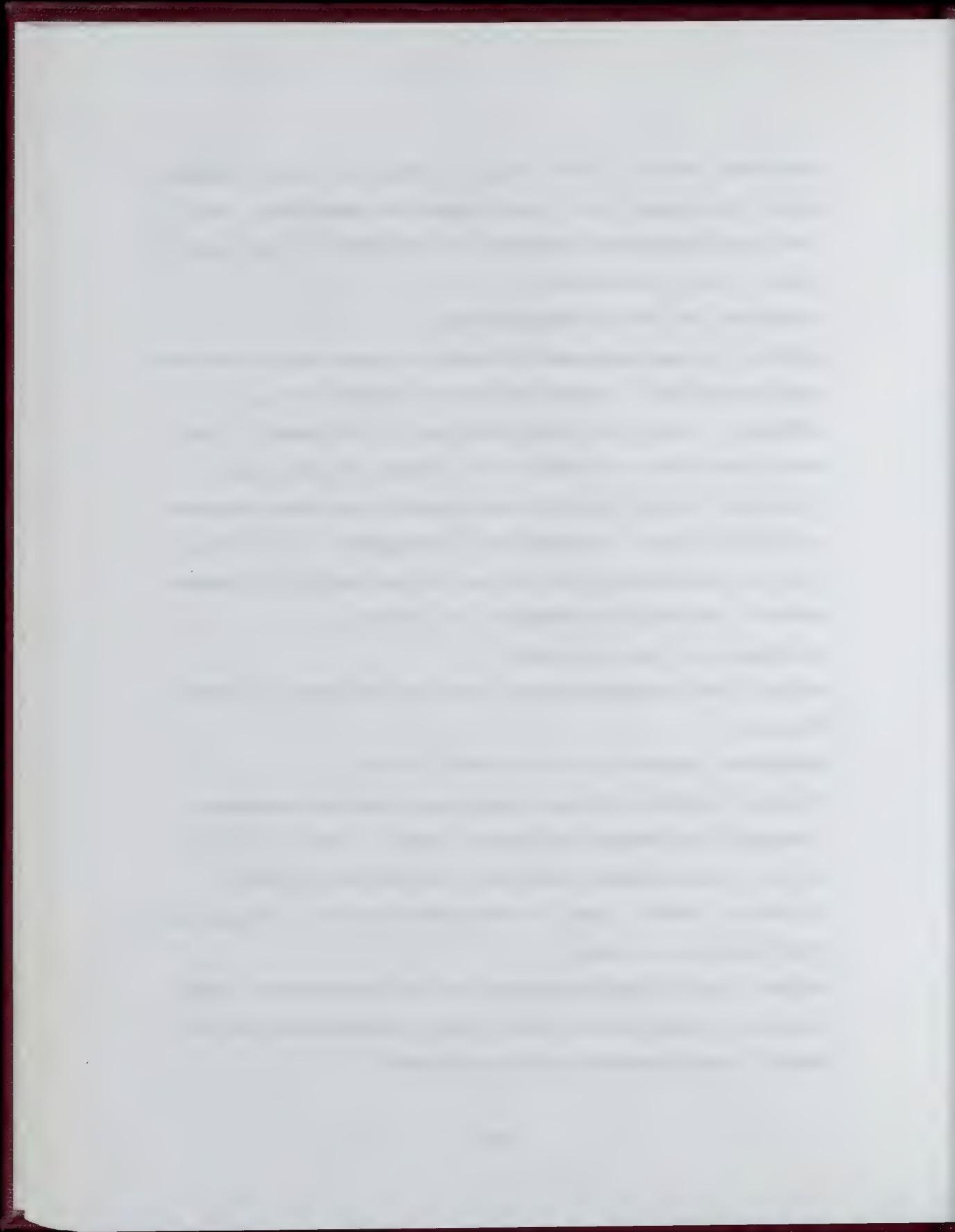
SMITH: You had mentioned a couple of other people that you had worked with. One by the name of [Ernst] Gall.

HERRMANN: Yeah, Gall must have been at the museum. And I don't know how I-- Probably also through classes, and evenings. He and his wife and my wife [Anni Marx Herrmann] got a bit closer. And when the '33 happened, he was the only one who really stuck to us. He was quite a different person. His way of looking at art history, at architecture, was very good.

SMITH: Then you mentioned a fellow by the name of [Georg] Pönsken.

HERRMANN: Pönsken was a volunteer in the Kunstabibliothek. He was a jolly man from the Rhineland. Completely different from Berlin people. Very lively, and we were very friendly with him. And he was all right, later on. After I left, I have never seen him. I only saw that he is still about.

SMITH: You had mentioned that you did exhibitions. That was one of your duties. What kind of exhibitions did you mount? How frequently did you do them?



HERRMANN: I think later on, anyhow-- There were constant exhibitions. When one was finished, the next one was prepared. And that may have taken a long time, so that probably in the course of the-- We had three exhibitions a year, or four exhibitions. There was a small room--perhaps twice or three times this size--next to the catalog room in the library where drawings and small exhibitions were arranged. And that I did. Then there was that in the Gropius building. This was a much bigger room, a huge hall. There were various exhibitions, not always completely done by the Kunstabibliothek. But the one I mentioned was when we offered the rooms to the photographic society. And then I helped them, but didn't really arrange them.

SMITH: That was the exhibit that got you in trouble, right?

HERRMANN: Yeah. At that time I was in trouble, yeah. One other time, I remember, we exhibited Bauhaus. Perhaps not Bauhaus completely, but there were quite a number of Bauhaus works exhibited. Maybe one was an exhibition, "The Chair," and another one must have been more general. They were glassware, etc.

SMITH: Could you explain why the photography exhibit got you in trouble?

HERRMANN: There was a big photographic exhibition which I



was more active in. I got the various photographers and chose them and went and saw them, selected and talked to them there. I was quite active. Then I wrote a catalog and introduction. And there I met--amongst others-- [László] Mohóly-Nagy. For some reason I saw him more often in his studio, where he experimented on things, photographic work. Nothing to do with cameras. And that was interesting when I saw him. He was very communicative and helpful. But there were others, quite a few-- All these, more or less all of them, I must have known.

SMITH: Did you know [Albert] Renger Patzsch?

HERRMANN: Yeah, that was one, yes.

SMITH: I mentioned him because he was, in some ways, an architectural photographer.

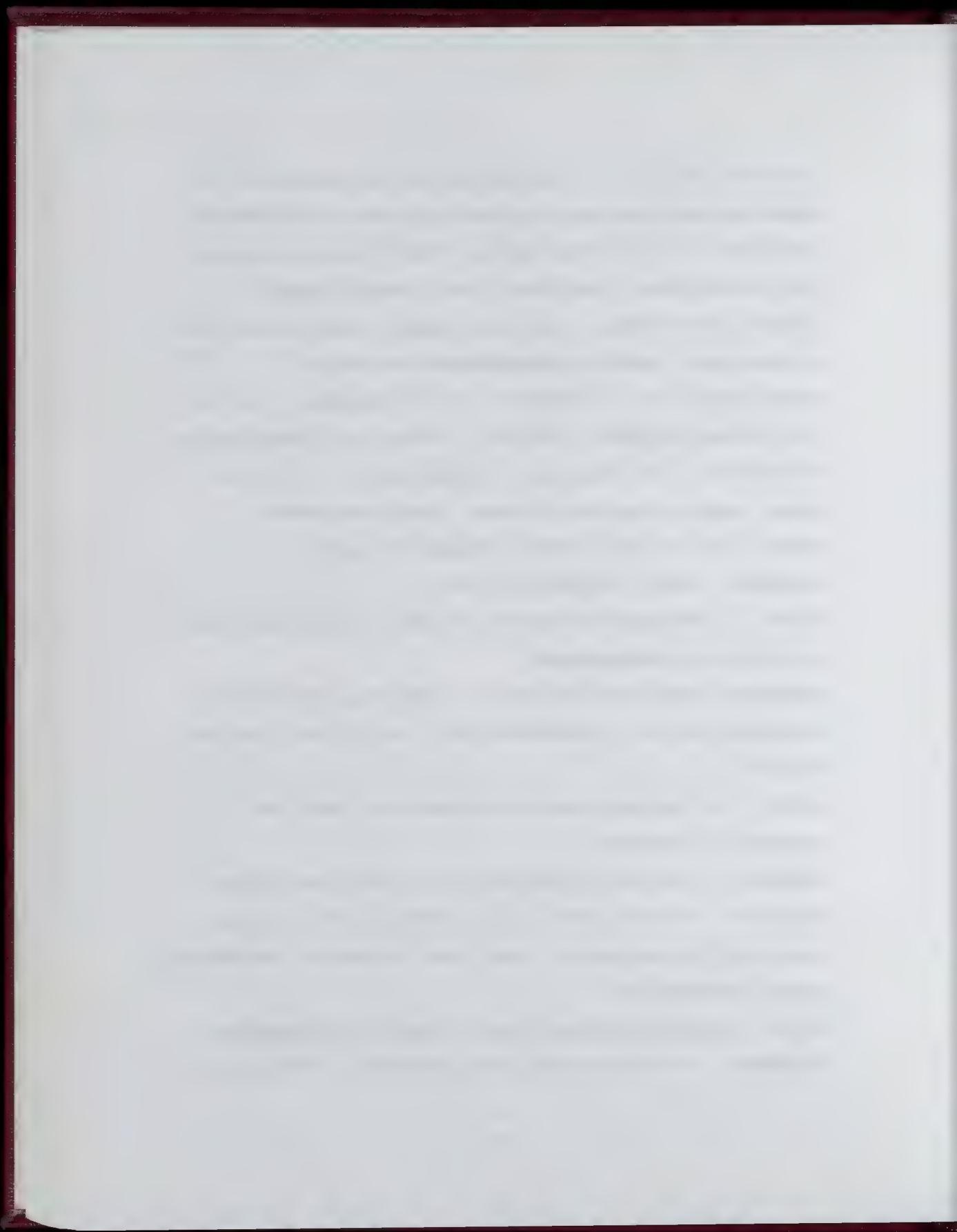
HERRMANN: Much later in Zürich, I met him, and he still remembered me and I remembered him. He, by then, was an old man.

SMITH: Did you have time to do research? Were you expected to publish?

HERRMANN: Yes, that I was expected to do. And I think I soon did. I'm not-- Well, if I joined in '27, I would think by '30, certainly, I must have started on the book on German architecture.

SMITH: Deutsche Baukunst [des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts].

HERRMANN: The first volume was published, I don't know,



'31 or '32.

SMITH: Nineteen thirty-two.

HERRMANN: Nineteen thirty-two. And that would have taken me two years.

SMITH: The Kunstabibliothek was a state institution and you were an employee of, I believe, the Prussian state, right?

HERRMANN: Yes. Prussian.

SMITH: I wanted to ask you the degree of autonomy that the Kunstabibliothek had in theory and in practice. Did the state have a cultural policy that affected how the Kunstabibliothek operated?

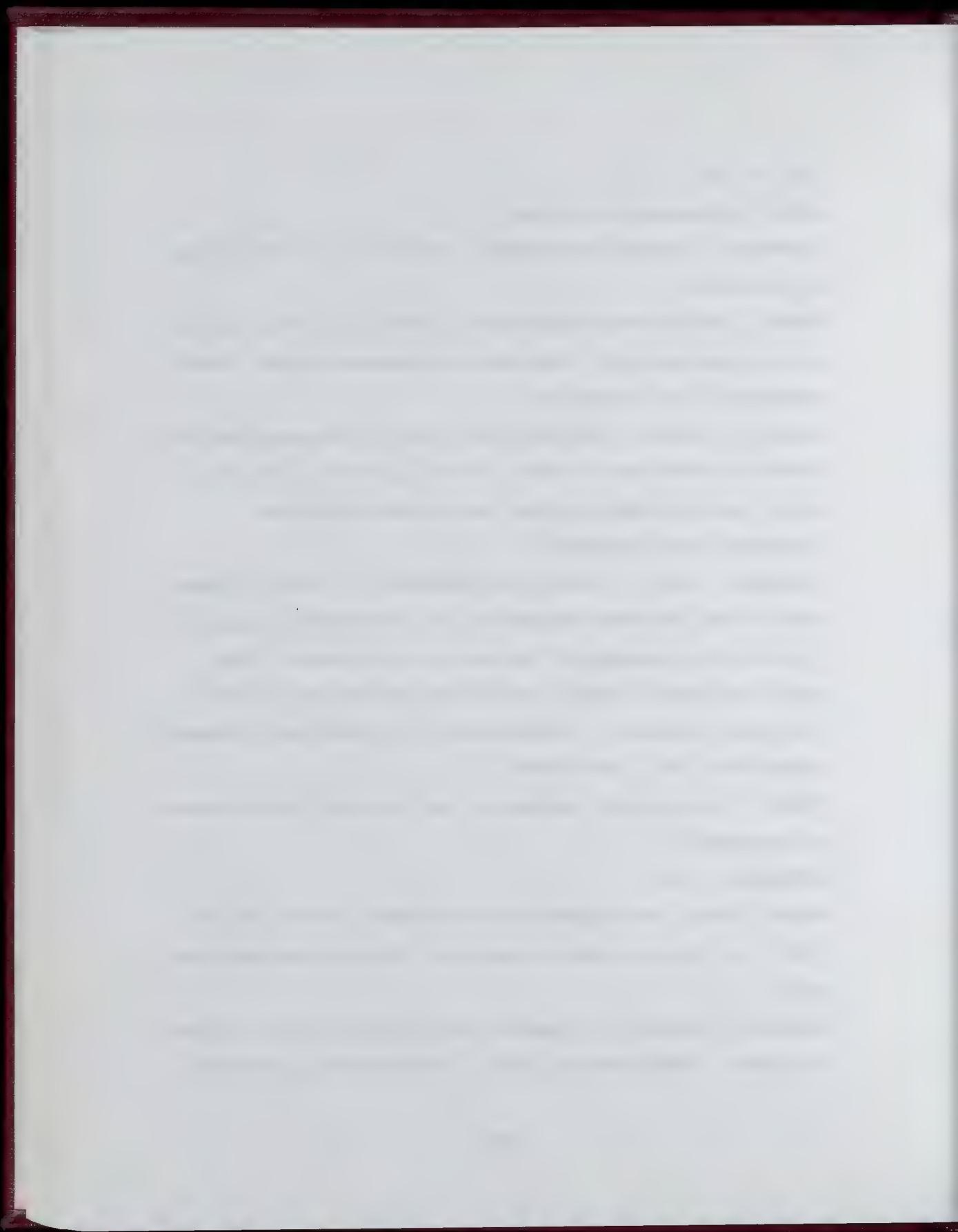
HERRMANN: Well, it would have affected if-- Well, by that time it was [Wilhelm] Waetzoldt. If Waetzoldt was against a policy which supported the modern art movement, there would have been a clash. But Glaser and Waetzoldt were very close together. There was no-- It could have happened under Bode, but I don't know.

SMITH: So Waetzoldt, generally, was friendly to the modern art movement?

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Okay, let's also talk about other aspects of your life. At this time you got married. How did you meet your wife?

HERRMANN: Actually, I suppose, the first time on a holiday in Tyrol. After the war, yeah. That's where we met for



the first time. Actually, she was much younger, and my younger brother [Klaus Herrmann] was more her age. So that was one circle, and I was the older one. And eventually, we married.

SMITH: What is your wife's name?

HERRMANN: Marx.

SMITH: Anni Marx?

HERRMANN: Anni Marx. Yeah.

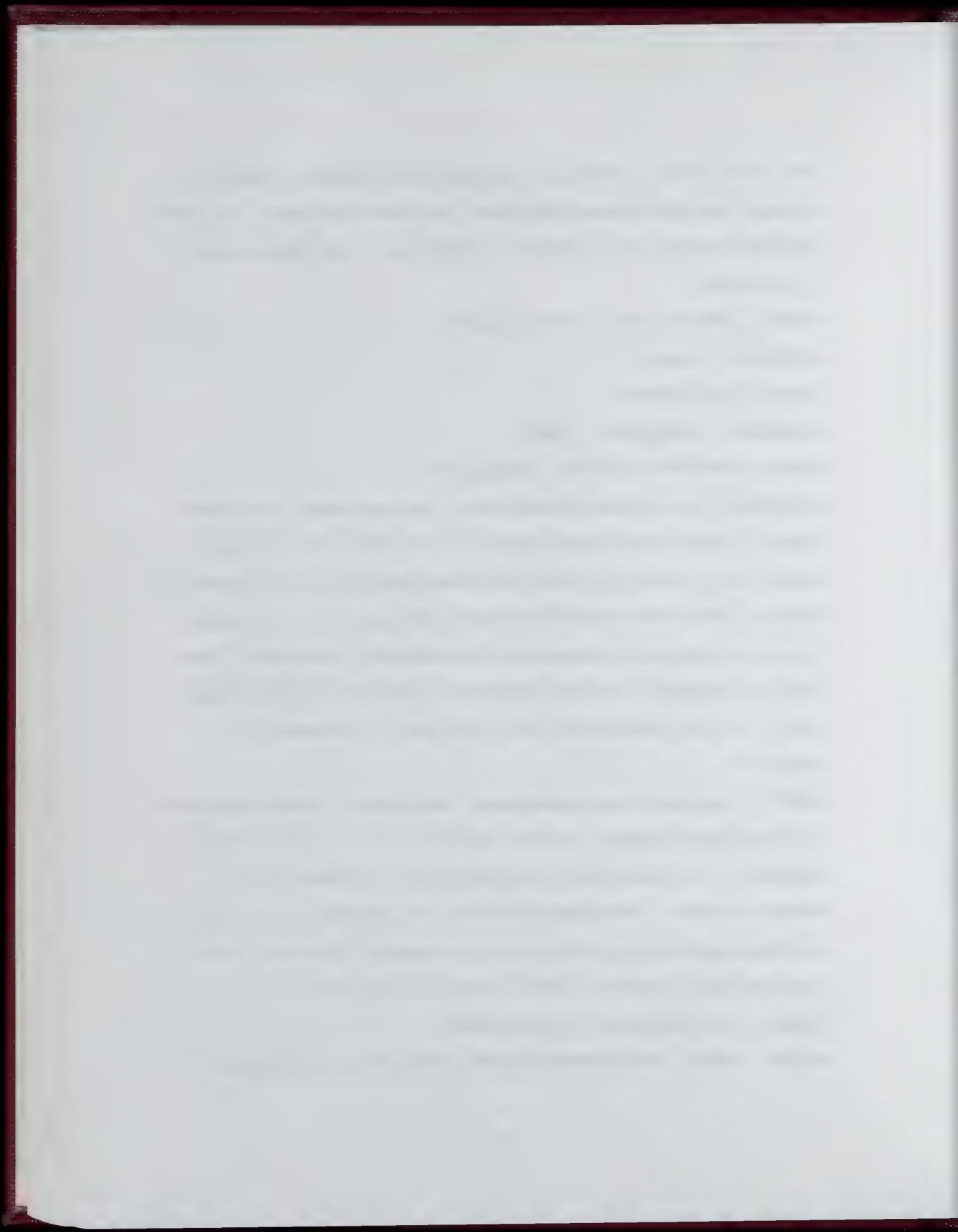
SMITH: And what did her family do?

HERRMANN: Her father [Adolf Marx] was a banker, a private banker. They came from Frankfurt, and my father-in-law moved when-- Shortly after they were married, they moved to Berlin. They were from Frankfurt, and part of the family lived in Frankfurt, Mannheim, thereabouts. And Anni, when she was younger, visited relatives, when she was a young girl. So her connection with that part of Germany is stronger.

SMITH: What was her educational background? What subjects did your wife study? How far along did she get in school?

HERRMANN: She went to an ordinary girls' school. You better ask her! When she finished she wanted to look after children and had a private little nursery, I think. But then she was eighteen, and we married when she was twenty. So she didn't do anything.

SMITH: Okay. You had mentioned, when we were talking



before, that your sister [Ilse Herrmann Kaden] had been involved with the Stefan George circle. Was this your older sister?

HERRMANN: Yes. She is three years older. She was interested and greatly involved in literature, poetry. The Stefan George Kreis wasn't--

SMITH: What did you think about George?

HERRMANN: I didn't-- I had no contact with them.

SMITH: No contact.

HERRMANN: It could have been that I had even less contact because of my sister. [laughter] We are quite good-- But she was certainly the older one.

SMITH: You also mentioned that you knew Stefan Zweig.

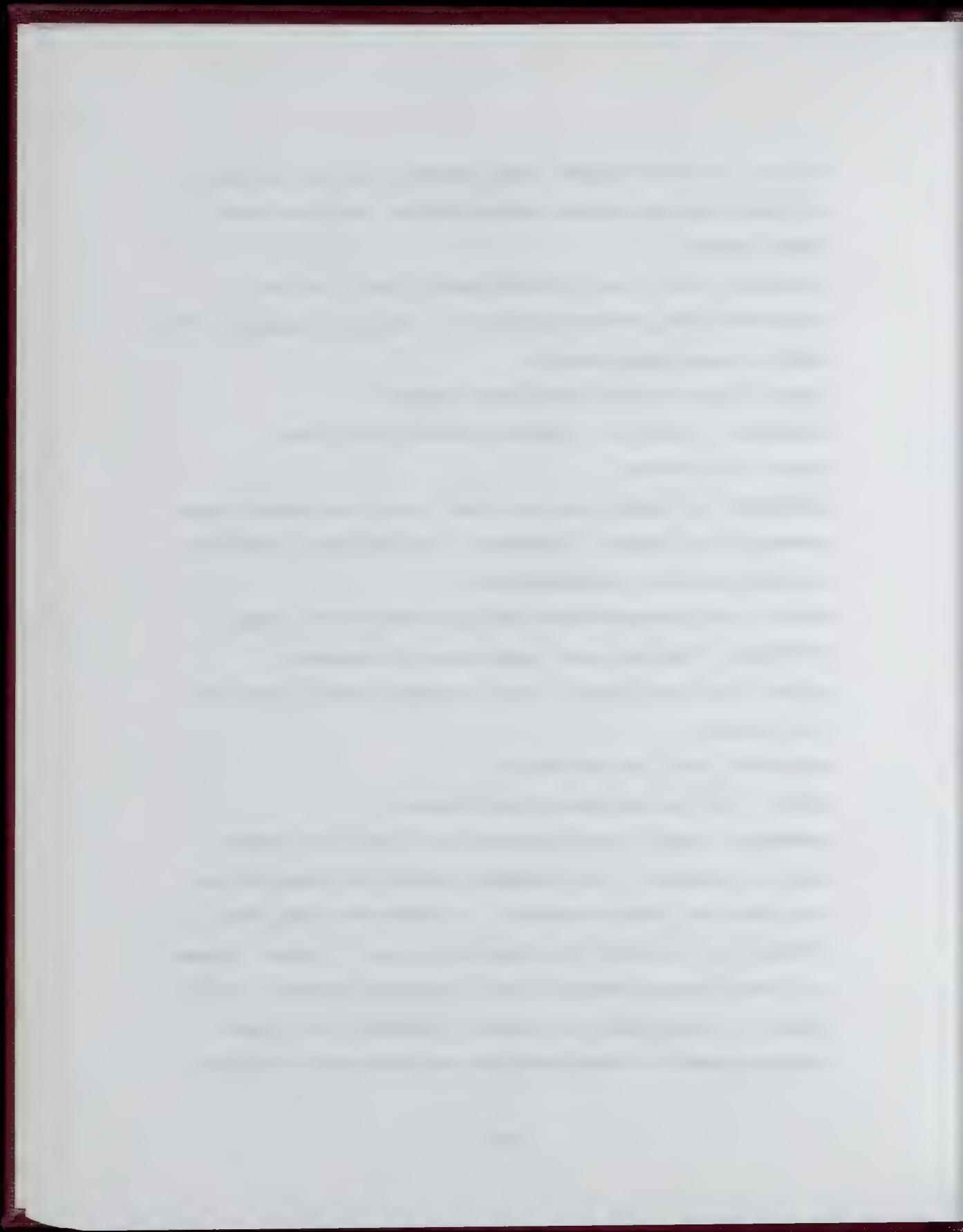
HERRMANN: That was much, much later, in London.

SMITH: Oh, much later. Okay. Perhaps we will talk about that later.

HERRMANN: And just by chance.

SMITH: And you had known Josef Albers?

HERRMANN: Yeah. That happened when I got into contact with the Bauhaus. That happened during that time in the late twenties, early thirties. It must have been even before I got a job at the Kunstabibliothek, I think. I went on a trip through Germany, mostly walking, hiking. And a friend, a young girl, she worked at Weimar, and I came through Weimar and knew that she was there and I visited



her and got into her studio, where they were working on the pre-course, doing all sorts of things with all sorts of material. Not drawing, painting, or anything, but doing sort of putter work. That was the first contact I had with the Bauhaus, and that must have been very early. And then they moved to Dessau, and by that time-- Maybe some work on the modern buildings-- Also, possibly through this girl. Then also Albers's wife was the daughter of a born Ullstein. And Ullsteins were very good friends of my parents. So Albers's wife, Annie Albers, I knew as a child already, and through all that I may have got to the Bauhaus. And through Annie Albers I got [to meet] Josef Albers.

SMITH: Before you started working on the Deutsche Baukunst book, were you interested in and were you following what was happening in contemporary art and architecture?

HERRMANN: In architecture, yes. I think from what I wrote, I must have been. But it may be that the work made me interested. But I think I was-- No I must have had that interest through the Kunstabibliothek. They also had modern architectural drawings. And then on Monday evenings there were quite a number of modern architects or architectural artists.

SMITH: This is Glaser's Monday evenings?



HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Did you know Walter Benjamin?

HERRMANN: No. I never met him.



TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 9, 1990

SMITH: Okay. I want to next move into a discussion of the Deutsche Baukunst book, but first I'd like to ask you the degree to which you were following the cultural avant-garde in general. Music, dance, theater, literature, and painting. I wanted to ask you what at that time seemed exciting to you personally. What interested you? Were there artists or writers?

HERRMANN: Well, apart from-- Well, the theater and cinema. Theater, certainly. [Leopold] Jessner and the Russians came over at that time. And the cinema. Not music, not jazz, not that I remember.

SMITH: What about twelve-tone music? Schoenberg?

HERRMANN: No. I liked at that time to hear music, but it never went further than that. And I'm sure I wouldn't have understood Schoenberg. I hardly understand him now.

SMITH: [laughter] Did you follow painting much, what was going on in painting?

HERRMANN: Yes, but in general ways.

SMITH: Whose work seemed exciting to you?

HERRMANN: Well-known names: [Franz] Marc, [Max] Pechstein. All the expressionists.

SMITH: Whose work seemed fatuous to you? Whose work seemed fatuous or overrated or uninteresting? Was there



work that you found to be talked about a lot, but you didn't appreciate it?

HERRMANN: Really, I couldn't answer that.

SMITH: That's fine.

HERRMANN: I'd have to think about it. It may come back perhaps but--

SMITH: Were you interested in dada?

HERRMANN: No. Not interested. Knew about it but--

SMITH: Did it seem stupid to you?

HERRMANN: It did. Yes, I think so.

SMITH: What about verism, what is called verism?

HERRMANN: Never heard of it. What is it?

SMITH: Oh. Well, I think Pechstein is connected to it, but it was a school in the 1920s.

HERRMANN: Do you mean die Brücke people? My father-in-law collected Brücke people. A close friend of his was [Anton] Kerschbaumer. I don't know. He was a Brücke--

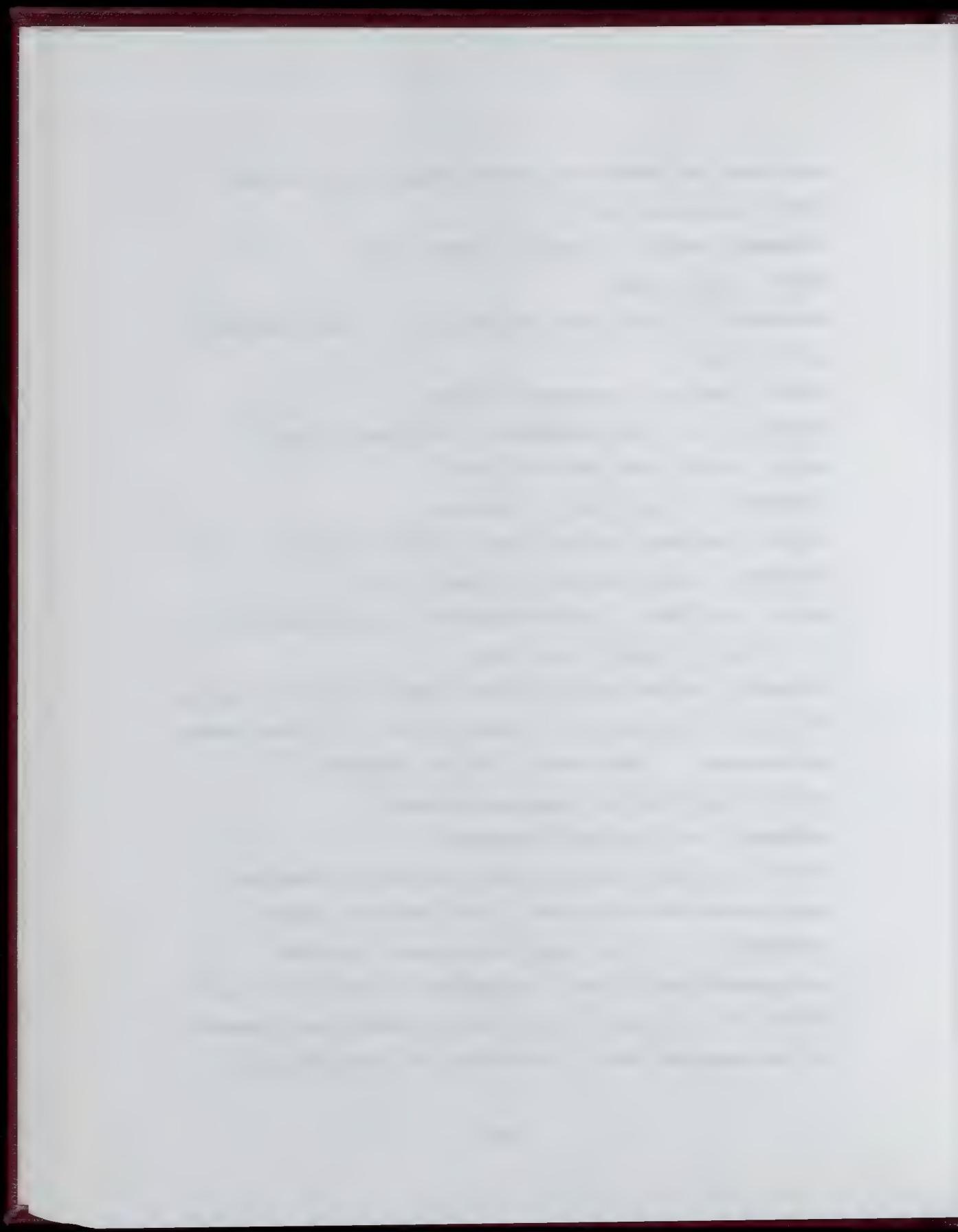
SMITH: What about die Neue Sachlichkeit?

HERRMANN: Yes, that was interesting.

SMITH: How about what you could call the proletarian revolutionary art in general, like [Bertolt] Brecht?

HERRMANN: No. I only came into contact with that photographic exhibition. And perhaps in some other ways.

SMITH: You said your sister [Ruth Herrmann] was a member of the Communist Party. Did you go to Communist Party



meetings at all?

HERRMANN: She was, but that she was I only learned after the event, after '33. I mean, she wouldn't have talked about it.

SMITH: Okay. I had a question about history in general. Did you follow the work, say, of Friedrich Meinecke?

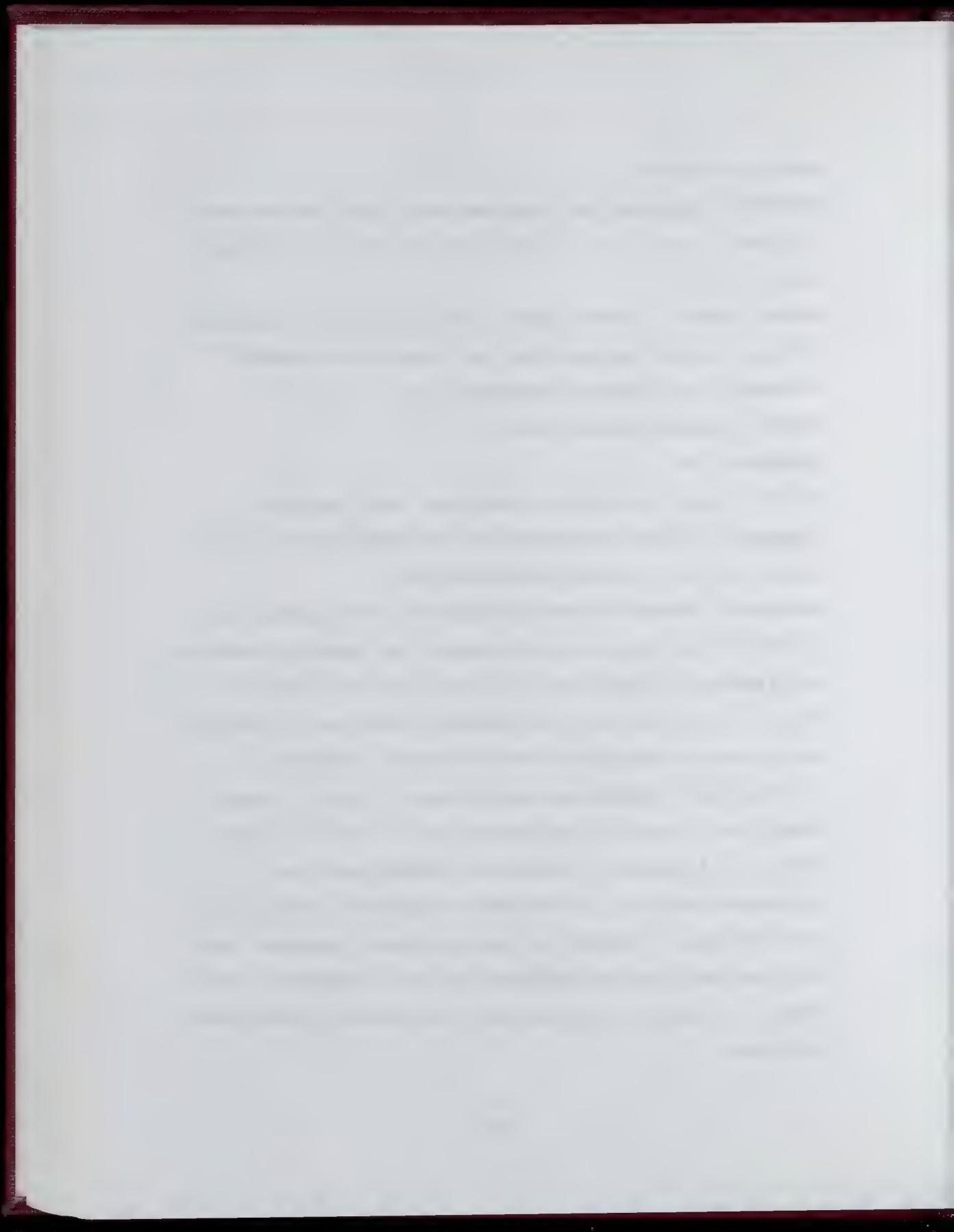
HERRMANN: No. Knew of his work, but--

SMITH: Nothing special then?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Okay. Let's talk about your book, Deutsche Baukunst. You had mentioned that Waetzoldt asked you to write the book. Why did he select you?

HERRMANN: Because it was difficult to find anybody who would have written about nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture at that time. It must have been difficult for him to offer that and find somebody. Here was a young man, and he knew me and knew I was interested in modern architecture. And he was quite right. I said, "Gladly. Yes." But I think it was mainly that it wasn't so easy for him to find anybody to write art history past the eighteenth century. Of course he could have found people to write about Schinkel or [Karl Gotthard] Langhans, but the idea was from the beginning of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. So that he would certainly have found difficult.



SMITH: In your art historical training, when you were going to school, how far up did art history go? What periods did it cover?

HERRMANN: It must have stopped at the early nineteenth century, if it went that far.

SMITH: If it went that far. Maybe 1830?

HERRMANN: It may be that it stopped with that.

SMITH: So you never had any lectures on the impressionists?

HERRMANN: No, no, no. It may be different in painting. I didn't have any art historical training specifically in painting. I don't know how far they went.

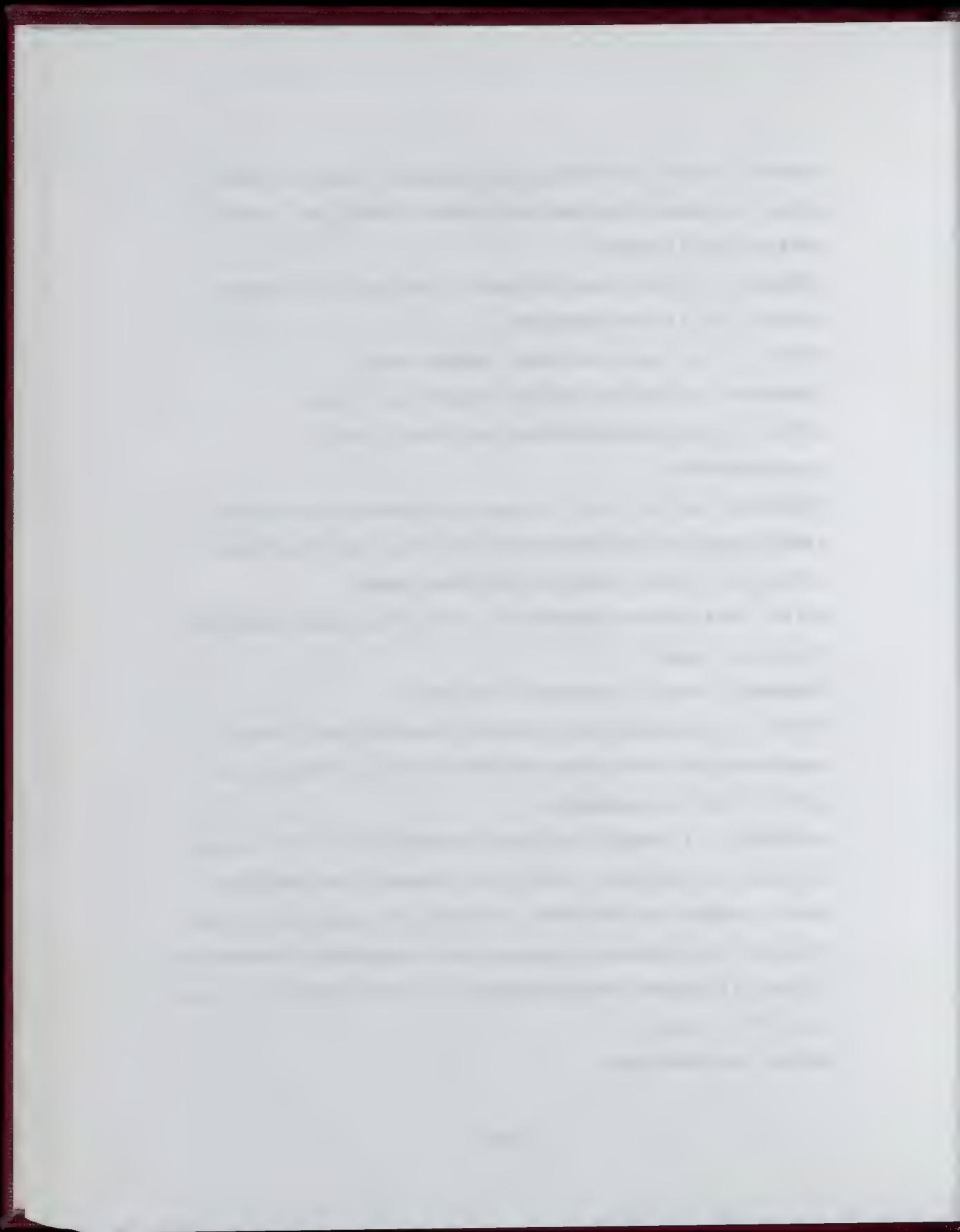
SMITH: But in architecture it would stop right after the Napoleonic wars?

HERRMANN: Yeah. Something like that.

SMITH: So the book that you were asked to write was something for which there was very little literature in general, and no academic--

HERRMANN: Of course there was literature, but the whole attitude at the time-- And I only dropped that attitude when I started on the book. My main attitude was to take whatever the nineteenth century said seriously, whereas up to now, if anybody wrote about it, it was-- What would you call it? Patri--

SMITH: Patronizing?



HERRMANN: Yeah. Patronizing. I mean, it was never taken seriously. And that was a very short time after I went into it. And you have to-- What they wrote, that that was sensible, and you have to take it seriously if you want to get at the kernel of it.

SMITH: Could you give me a sense of the public that you were writing the book for?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: No? Did you have--?

HERRMANN: Well, I knew the text was limited to about seventy-five pages. Jedermanns Bücherei, Everyman's Library, was popular for an educated public.

SMITH: But you were asked to keep your language simple, relatively?

HERRMANN: They didn't tell me. I tried to. No, it had to be-- I don't know. I don't think they told me, but there is a whole series. Have you ever seen them? It's about psychology, about biology, about all subjects. Jedermanns Bücherei.

SMITH: No, I haven't seen the series.

HERRMANN: In England it is Everyman's Library.

SMITH: Oh, it's the same? Everyman's Library?

HERRMANN: It's the same title. But they are a little bit more attractive in German and were written by good people, scholars, who did not talk down. You expected that your



reader had some background.

SMITH: Okay. Did you define the problem of the book, or did Waetzoldt say to you, "This is what we need to do"?

HERRMANN: He told me the architecture. And then he also wanted to have the applied arts in, because he had covered sculpture, painting. I think his main section, which he edited, was art history. He covered architecture from the Greeks on and painting. He had covered all that. But the applied arts were very badly treated, and he said that-- There I had a bit of a battle with him, and I lost. He insisted. When I asked after a while, I said, "I can't deal with two centuries in one volume. I would like another volume." And he agreed. But I must include the applied arts.

SMITH: The Kunstgewerbe.

HERRMANN: The Kunstgewerbe. I tried to get out of it, because it didn't fit. But he insisted, and so I wrote it. And I think, I remember--and also when I read it now--that my interest faded.

SMITH: Moving into your intentions as the author of the book, as opposed to the publishers, how did you define the problem for yourself? Once you accepted the assignment to write the book, how did you go about defining for yourself what the book was actually going to be about?

HERRMANN: I tried to define certain periods in historical



evolution, always with the view that developed while I was collecting material, that all the problems which started around 1800 went all the way through to 1927. And that was my object to show, that there was a steady evolution, of course with certain steps.

SMITH: How did the book relate to what is often called the Denkmalpflege tradition? Did you see it as having a relationship to that?

HERRMANN: Denkmalpflege, no. It was really historical. Purely historical, mainly. Of course, other objects came in, for instance urban planning. But it was a historical development.

SMITH: When did you decide to divide the book into two volumes?

HERRMANN: I don't remember, but fairly soon. But it can't have been too soon--otherwise Waetzoldt wouldn't have listened. I must have told him I put so much together. That's one volume.

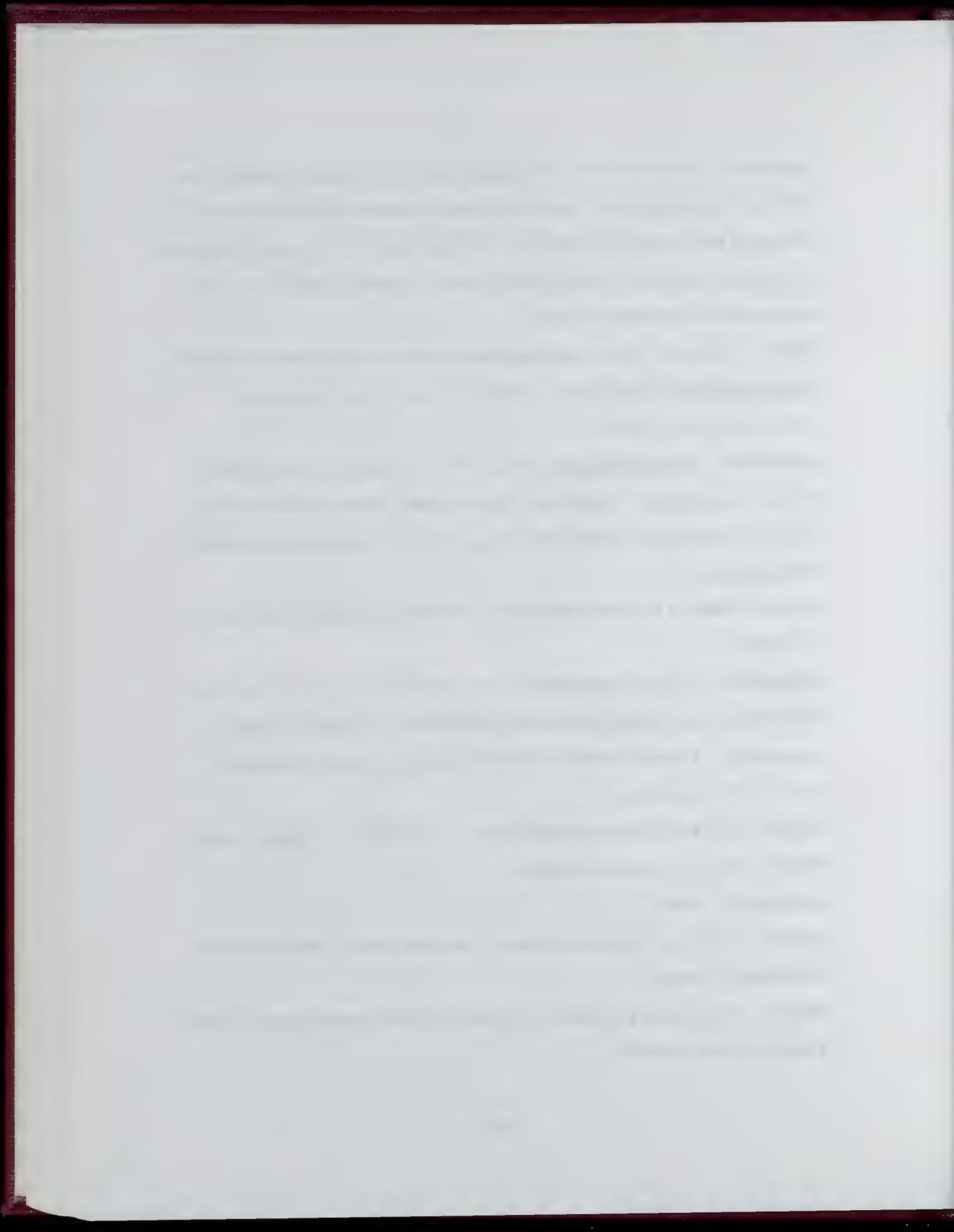
SMITH: So the first volume ends, I believe, around 1840. That's the cutting-off point.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: And you actually start, not at 1800, but at 1770.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: How were you able to justify that particular time frame to Waetzoldt?



HERRMANN: Well, in the book I saw, I think, a big divide about 1840 with [Gottfried] Semper. I must have told them that I wanted to express somehow what was new, what Semper brought new. And after a lot of searching I came to the expression "symbolic architecture." For which one can still say something. But at that time I was convinced that that was a very good description.

SMITH: And you also argue that 1770 is the beginning of the modern era for architecture. Could you summarize what led you to that conclusion that 1770, more or less, was the break?

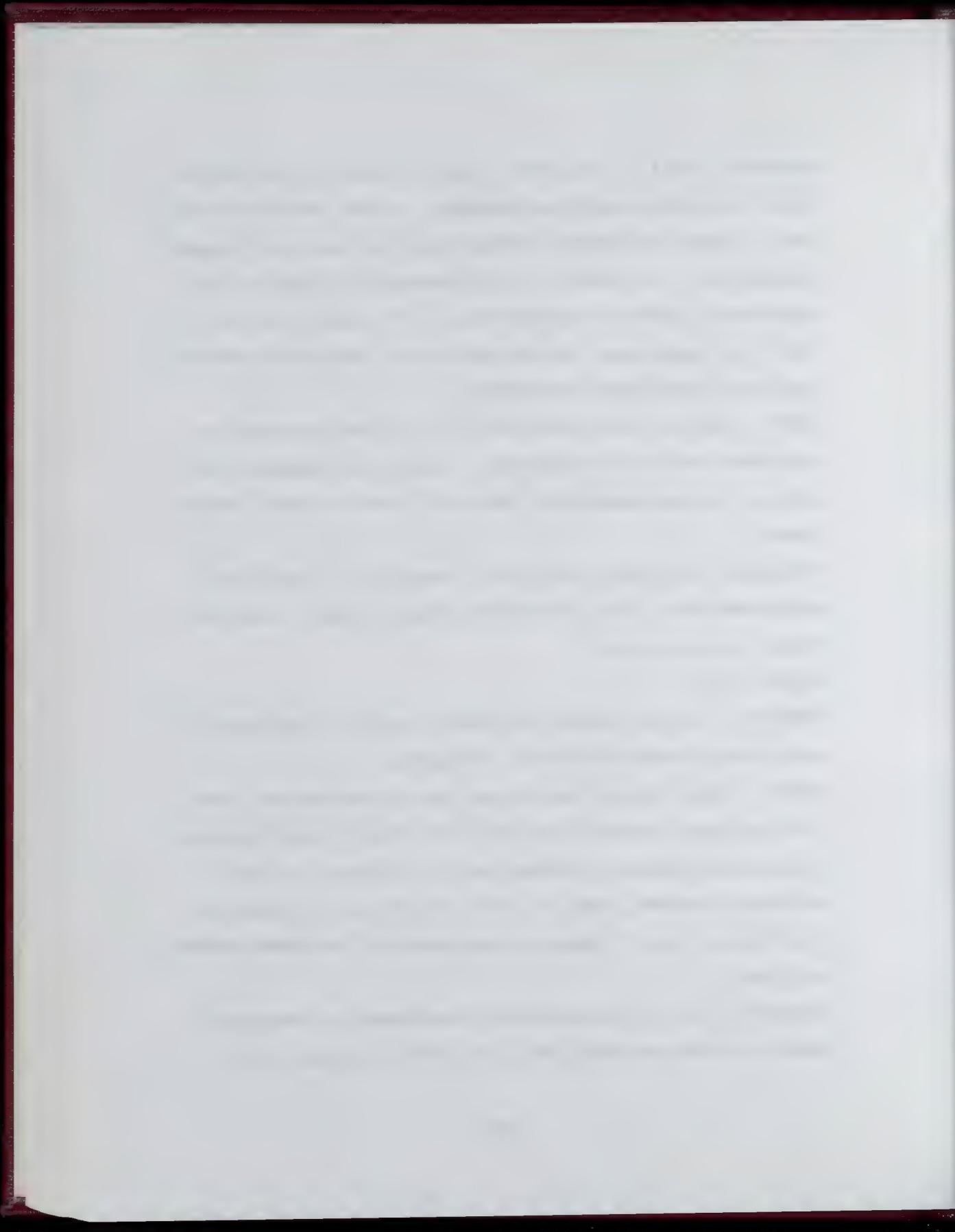
HERRMANN: Why there was 1770? [laughter] I must have explained that. Now, I would say that I didn't talk about French architecture.

SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: Maybe I didn't mention it at all. But that's what I must have had in mind, I suppose.

SMITH: Okay. One of the things that struck me was just the very fact of--and I realize this doesn't come from you necessarily--taking a century as an art historical unit. You know, because prior to 1800, everything is broken up into style, right? Baroque, neoclassical, and Renaissance, and that.

HERRMANN: Well, the expression nineteenth or twentieth century is an editorial one. But 1900 is a more real



divide. Probably 1890 would have been. But there is from the other end, the 1770-- I may very well have come to 1770. Since I don't talk about the revolutionary architecture--[C. N.] Ledoux or so, they don't get into the book--it is quite possible that the last book before mine ended there. I don't remember that, but it's quite possible.

SMITH: When you were writing the book, was the twentieth-century work the most important to you?

HERRMANN: Yes. I think in the end it became, yeah. I didn't know at the beginning.

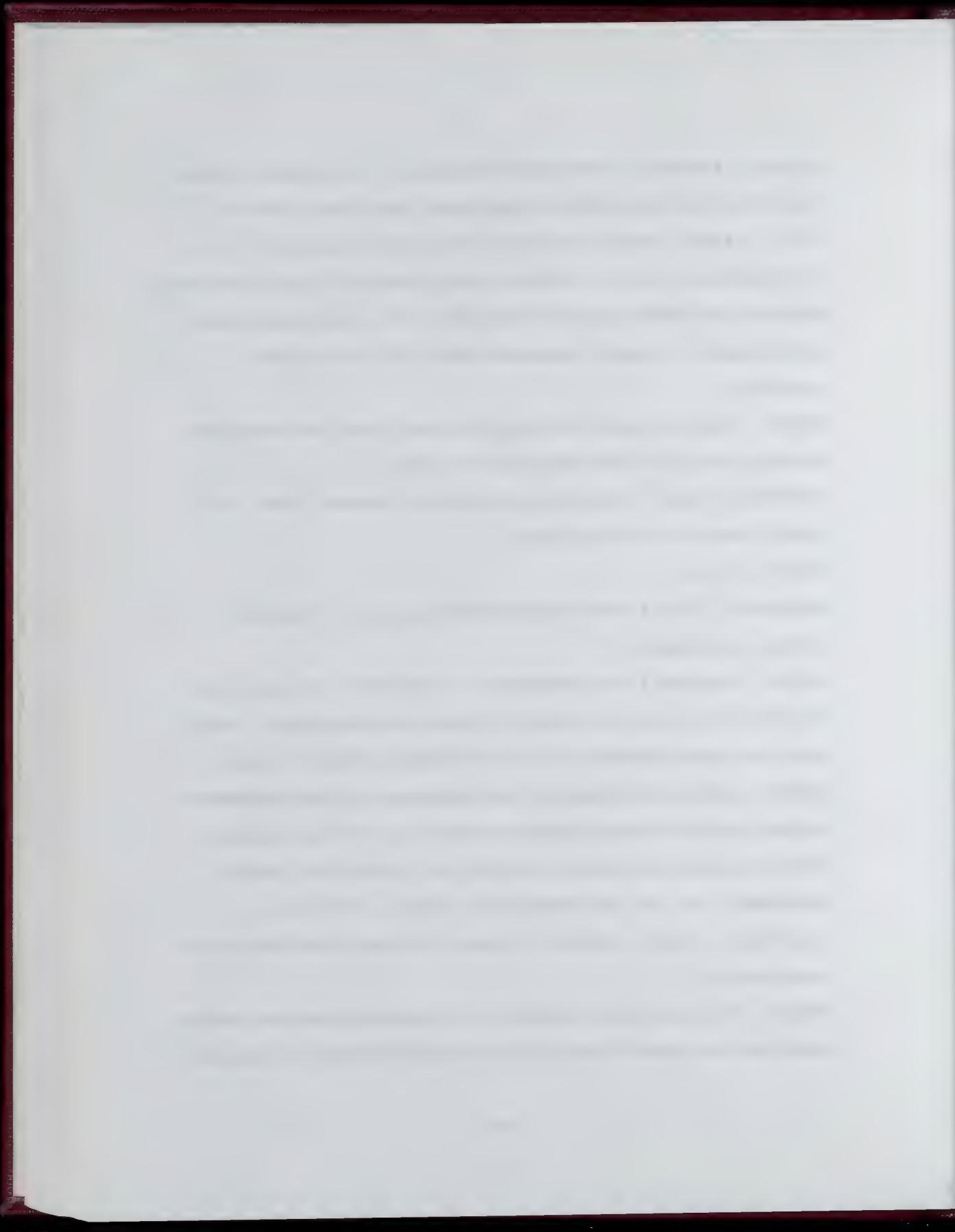
SMITH: I see.

HERRMANN: It all came through the research. Then it became important.

SMITH: Because I was wondering if the book, for you, was an effort to find the roots of modern architecture. And were you then looking at the nineteenth century to see modern architecture against the backdrop of the nineteenth century and not simply against something that was purely revolutionary that kind of sprung up in the late 1890s?

HERRMANN: No, all the roots were there. That was important, I still think. I mean, I am now working on the same period.

SMITH: When you were dealing with twentieth-century German architecture--and I know you stretched Germany to include



Austria, and in that sense German-speaking architects--did you find it constraining not to refer to French or American architects of the same period? I mean, this concept of the International style.

HERRMANN: On the contrary, probably I gladly accepted that constraint. And funnily enough, I did exactly the same just now. I wrote these here for the [J. Paul] Getty [Center for the History of Art and the Humanities]. I translated the German texts from 1828 to 1850, and I wrote about them [in In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on Architectural Style] and didn't look to and didn't mention France or anybody else. And that is just--I think it is a mistake. But what interests me is that I did the same thing sixty years ago to exclude and not be bothered by other influences.

SMITH: I actually found it refreshing in some ways. But it's also interesting, because I know that in Germany Corbusier was followed and certainly Frank Lloyd Wright with the Wasmuth portfolios.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: And then [Richard] Neutra had published Wie Baut Amerika in 1929.

HERRMANN: Yes, there is a lot. And I just concentrated on Germany. That may be in certain ways good, but in other ways not so good.



SMITH: I do want to get more into some of your evaluations in the book, but I wondered if you could-- Were you familiar with the books that Cornelius Gurlitt had written on the nineteenth century?

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: How would you compare your perspective with Gurlitt's?

HERRMANN: I think his didn't relate, as far as I remember, to modern architecture at all. It was a very constructive book on baroque or rococo architecture and brought a lot of material which was unknown. But it didn't affect my problem.

SMITH: What about Adalbert Matthaei's book?

HERRMANN: Matthaei's, yes. I don't mention him, though, do I? I didn't mention him?

SMITH: No. But given the kind of book that it is, you don't really-- You have your bibliography at the end, but it's not--

HERRMANN: And he's mentioned there?

SMITH: Yes. But it's not the sort of book where you would refer to ongoing scholarship.

HERRMANN: Yes. On the other hand, I think I spoke about [Henry] van de Velde.

SMITH: Yes. Extensively. But then van de Velde is a practitioner as well as a theorist. You could hardly avoid



speaking of van de Velde.

HERRMANN: Did I talk about the classical trend of 1910 to 1930?

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: Do I--?

SMITH: Well, let's get into some of the questions of the book.

HERRMANN: I must read the book. [laughter]

SMITH: In the book you describe the Gropius and Meyer [Fagus] Schuhwerk Fabrik in the 1914 Werkbund Exhibition as the beginning of "modern constructional romanticism." I'm wondering what you perceived to be the limits of structural honesty?

HERRMANN: I think it's-- I don't know. What I thought at the time, that structural honesty is important, but whether I realized what was honest and what was not-- I don't know whether I saw that.

SMITH: It is interesting, because as I read it--and, again, I am looking at it from a perspective of sixty years later--I thought it was surprisingly, for the time, skeptical of structural honesty as a theory. There was a tone appreciative of the aesthetic movement, but somewhat skeptical of some of the philosophical assumptions. But maybe I was misreading it.

HERRMANN: I think that I-- Quite a bit of modern



architecture I was critical of because they were dishonest. That I would say.

SMITH: Could you explain again for me the significance of the term Maskenarchitektur? The mask architecture.

HERRMANN: Well, Semper or--?

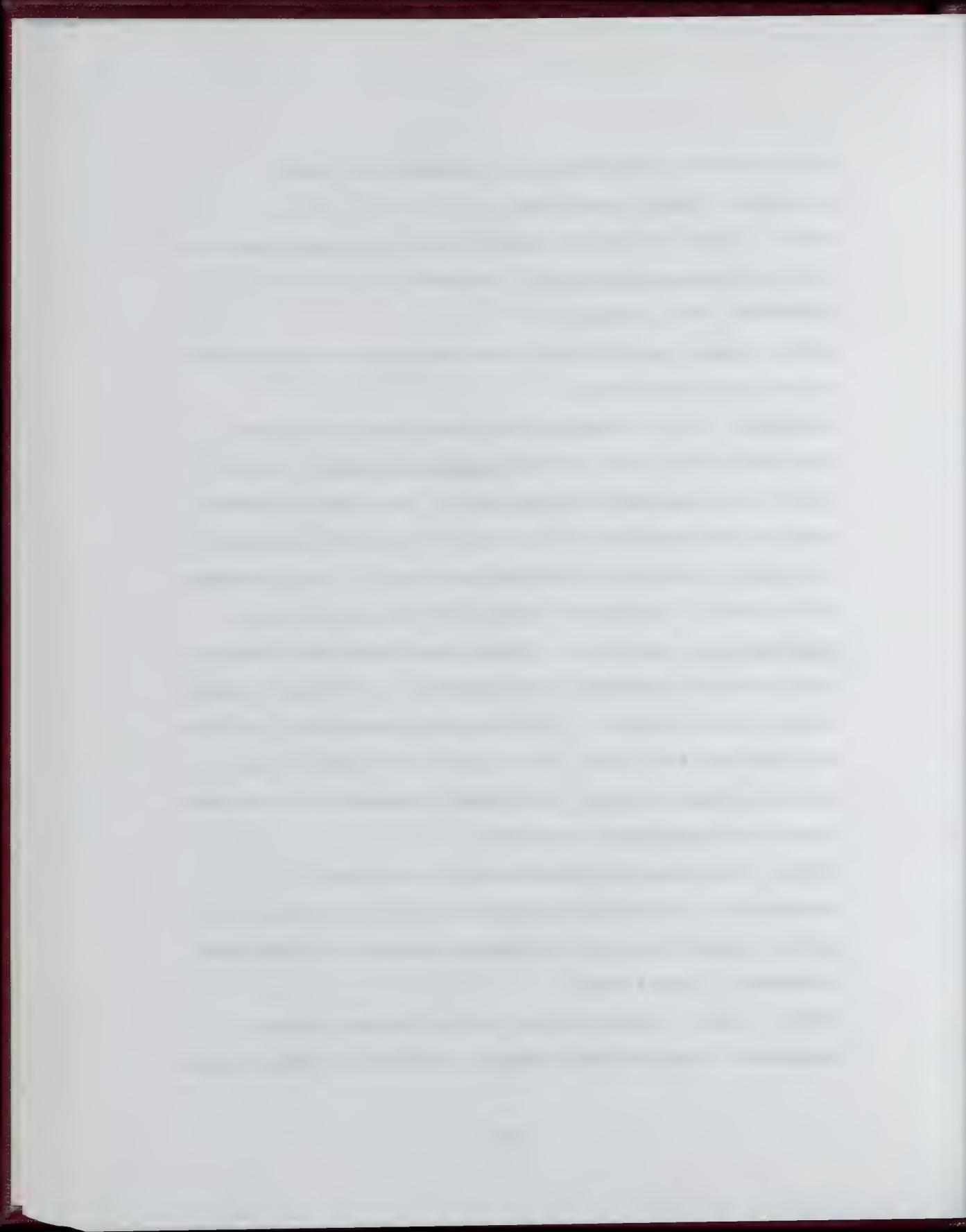
SMITH: Well, particularly I was thinking in relationship to the work of Max Taut.

HERRMANN: Oh. I think at that time, say in the late twenties, there was a lot of Maskenarchitektur. And of that I was aware and critical of it. But some of those were at the forefront. They were-- I have the feeling I just went a little bit further than that. I only remember, for instance, in the book when I did try to talk about Kunstgewerbe, the chairs I chose were traditional chairs. They were very pleasant, very graceful, and those I chose against modern chairs. That was quite conscious. And this was just how far I went, and my mild criticism of the Bauhaus refers to that. It's that I thought that the next development goes away from that.

SMITH: What about in relationship to Max Taut, in particular? Taut is someone who is not talked about much in the United States or in English-language publications.

HERRMANN: I don't know.

SMITH: Well, I bring up Taut partly because in many respects I think the Anglo-Saxon perception of the twenties



in Germany, the contours, the general lines were set by [Nikolaus] Pevsner, because he wrote the first important English-language study of twentieth-century architecture. I'm wondering at the time, in the late twenties, early thirties, did you have conversations with Pevsner about modern architecture?

HERRMANN: I must have. I remember at that time he worked in Dresden. He was at the graphic collection. And he came to Berlin to see me because he wanted to see modern buildings. I took him around, and certainly I must have-- A whole day I took him around. We must have talked about it. But that is all I can tell you.

SMITH: So you don't--

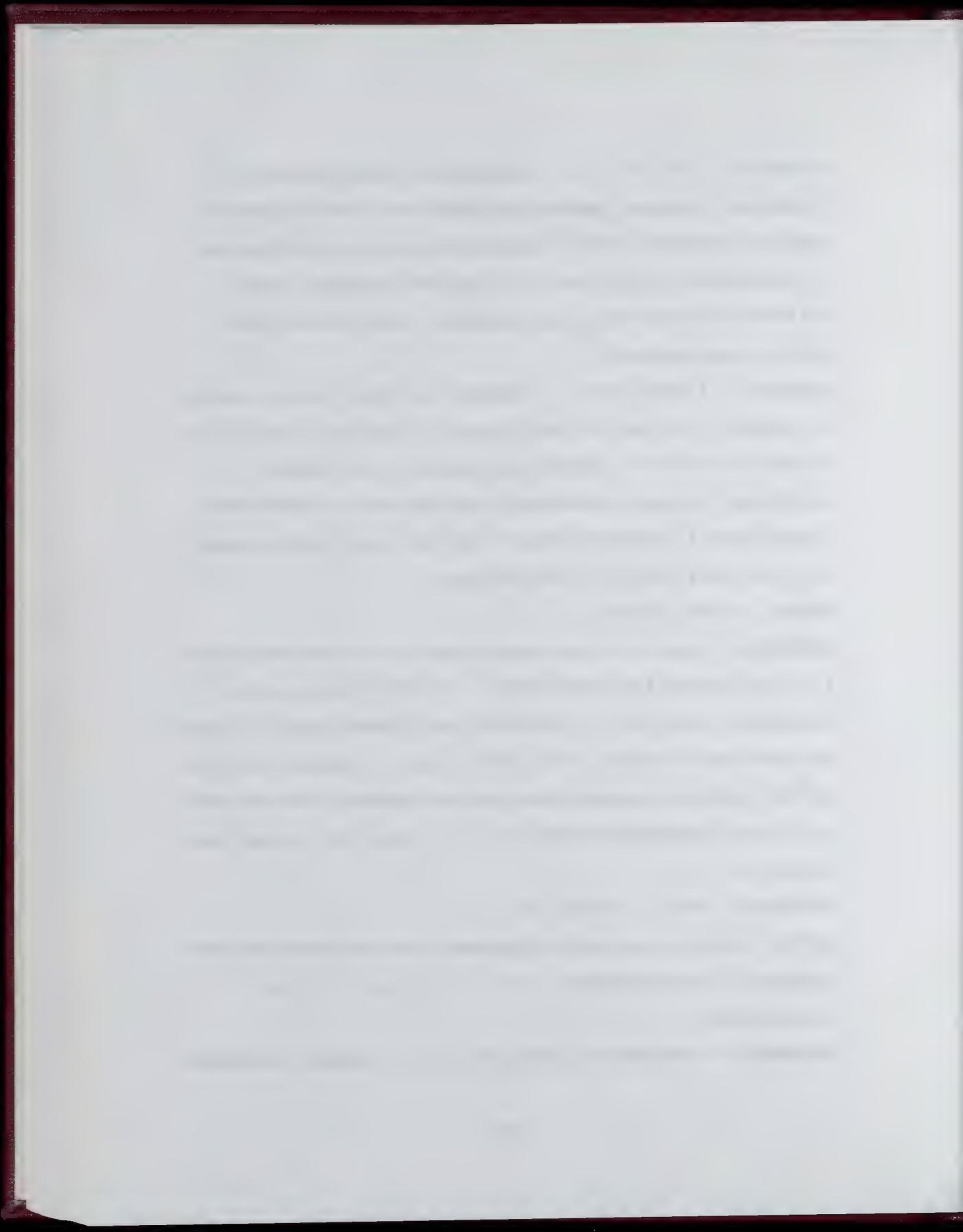
HERRMANN: I don't say my objections to his attitude start-- All that starts from much later. At that time, we didn't disagree. Later on, if we would have talked about it, then we would have argued. But I don't think I argued with him.

SMITH: Well, it sounds like you were probably the one who had a more developed opinion at that time, and he was just beginning.

HERRMANN: Yeah. I think so.

SMITH: Later on you would disagree with his functionalist approach to architecture. What is the basis of your disagreement?

HERRMANN: My objections came when I was, again, interested



in it. When he wrote the Pioneers [of Modern Design]-- I don't know whether I was critical. Later I became critical when I thought about it. Yeah.

SMITH: Another term that you use that I wanted to discuss a little bit further was "expressionistic Jugendstil" to refer to the architecture of the immediate postwar period.

HERRMANN: That I did not agree with. I mean, purely from taste. I know that much later Pevsner was appalled when Jugendstil became acceptable and his young pupils started to be interested in Jugendstil. He was horrified. Whereas I appreciated it as new and productive. But even in the book, I was deeply impressed by Otto Wagner's Postsparkasse. And I've just seen it again. Of course there's a lot of Jugendstil in it and in the whole movement. But I know that at the time when I wrote the book, there were two--not historically, as a historian, but simply as taste--there were two periods which we did reject. That was neoclassical architecture of the 1810s, 1820s--it was the worst architecture there could be--and the Jugendstil. The 1810-20 was such a boring, regimented style. It is strange. Later on, I looked at it historically different. But these were just reactions to it. And Jugendstil. No.

SMITH: What about in terms of someone like Erich Mendelsohn? How did you respond to his work?



HERRMANN: No. It was too unserious.

SMITH: [Hans] Poelzig?

HERRMANN: I liked him more. But I liked him more as a man. He was a wonderful man, whereas Mendelsohn wasn't. Not personally. But he was a showman, and Poelzig wasn't. He created his works.

SMITH: In writing the book, obviously you had to go around and look at a lot of buildings. Did you take the photographs that were used in the book?

HERRMANN: I don't think so, no.

SMITH: Did you go and talk to the architects in order to get background information?

HERRMANN: With Taut. But that had to do-- I don't know which Taut it was. I wrote an article on Taut apartment houses. And there I met him. It may not have been in connection with the book.

SMITH: Did you know [Rudolf] Steiner or [Otto] Bartrning?

HERRMANN: No. I didn't know.

SMITH: No. Just their work.

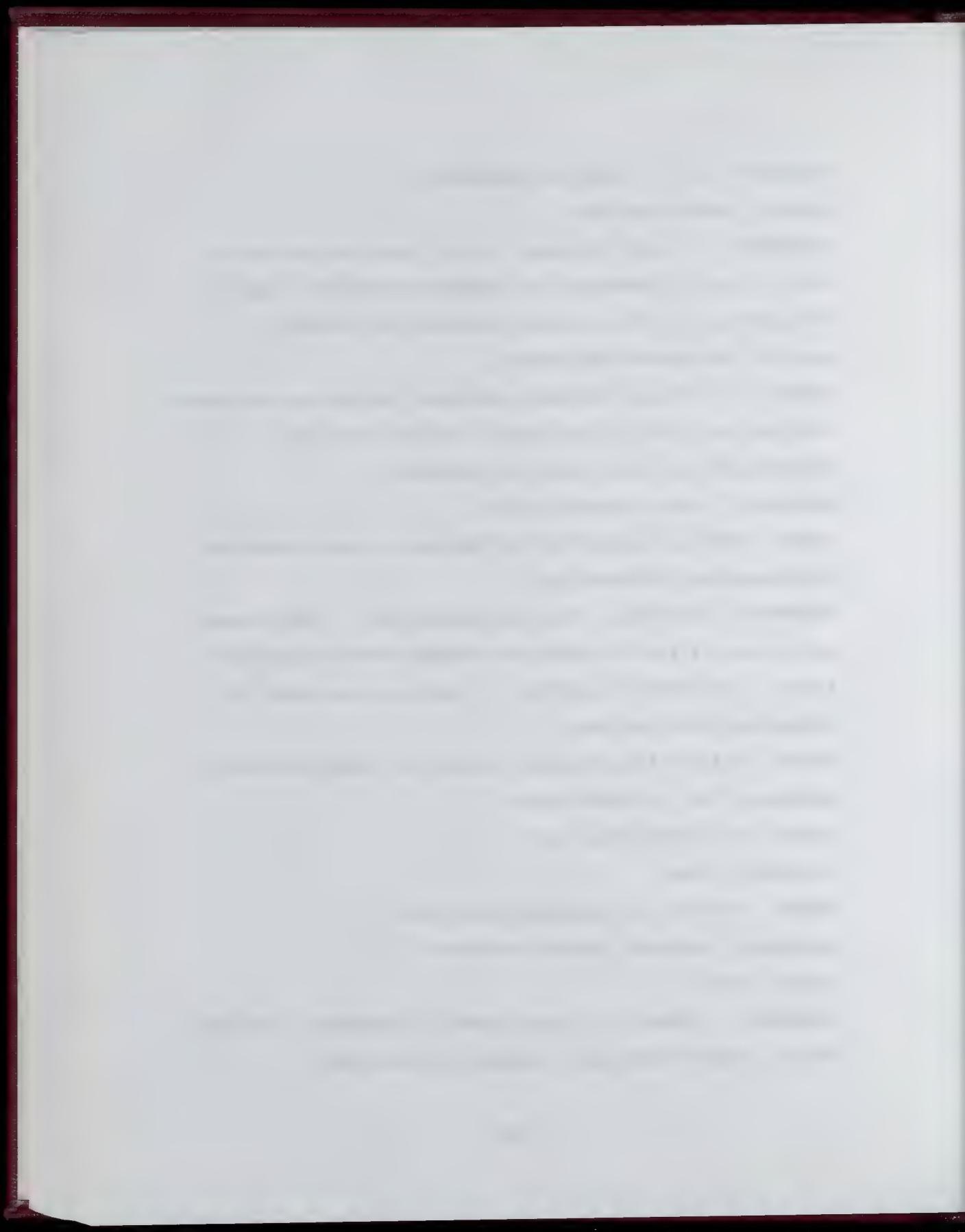
HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: How did you evaluate their work?

HERRMANN: Steiner? Rudolf Steiner?

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: I didn't. It was close to Jugendstil. And the other, I don't know what I thought at the time.



SMITH: What was your feeling about ornamentation?

HERRMANN: On the whole it was close to Adolph Loos. On the whole I think ornamentation was, perhaps not a crime, but it came close to it.

SMITH: What about when ornamentation is worked into the structure of the building? I'm thinking of somebody like Louis Sullivan, for example, where the ornamentation articulates the structure of the building and the various functions.

HERRMANN: Well, that would be a building positive to it. But, of course, the tendency at the time was to be very frightened of ornamentation. And I think, on the whole, I agreed with it. I would have accepted it if it was a serious attempt. But probably I would have overlooked its seriousness. But just because--

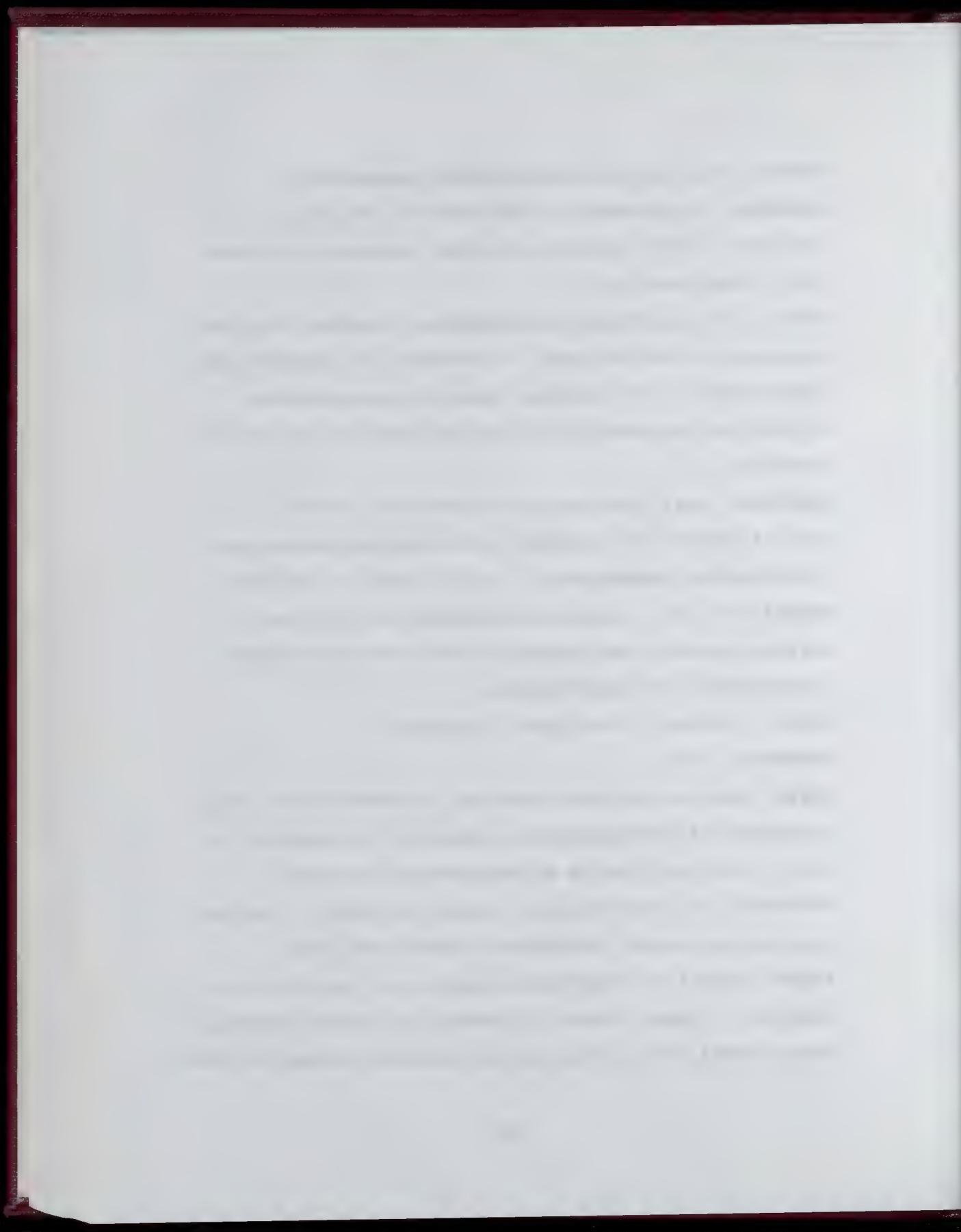
SMITH: Because it was there. [laughter]

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: What do you think were the limitations that led to the demise of expressionistic Jugendstil so quickly? It didn't last very long as an architectural movement.

HERRMANN: It very much went through the head. It was an intellectual revolt, which never lasted that long.

SMITH: One of the major preoccupations in Berlin at the time, and I guess in much of Germany, was social housing. There seemed to be a housing shortage and the need to build



these housing blocks. What were your attitudes towards the problem of social housing?

HERRMANN: Well, they were-- It wasn't the Stuttgart Weissenhofsiedlung--

SMITH: Yeah, the Weissen--

HERRMANN: I mean, that was the attempt to settle this, to come to terms. And I think other urban housing that I dealt with in relation to Berlin, historically, was more focused on the housing problems of Berlin in the nineteenth century. We tried to resolve them in Weissenhof and Grunewald and the Eichkamp.

SMITH: Did you have more personal sympathy, say, with the social housing movement than with Neue Sachlichkeit?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Okay. Now, there were alternatives to functionalism and expressionism. I think trying to look back at that time, there are lots of different tendencies jockeying with each other, and nobody really knew which was going to be considered the best. I am wondering how you felt about, say, the work of Paul Bonatz.

HERRMANN: Bonatz I accepted. I think I was positive to him. I don't know whether I still would, but I remember--

SMITH: What about Ferdinand Kramer?

HERRMANN: I don't know.

SMITH: Alfred Fischer-Essen? No?



HERRMANN: It doesn't mean anything to me.

SMITH: Yeah. Well, that's interesting in itself. Werner Moser?

HERRMANN: Yeah, I was more positive to him, but it is faint.



TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

FEBRUARY 12, 1990

SMITH: We were talking about Deutsche Baukunst [des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts] when we left off. You had said, when we were talking before the session started, that this book sent you in a certain direction that you continued on afterwards. Could you explain what you meant by that a little bit? It sounded like you were indicating that this book really began--

HERRMANN: I don't think I said that.

SMITH: Oh.

HERRMANN: Are you sure? No. I don't remember.

SMITH: Maybe I misunderstood.

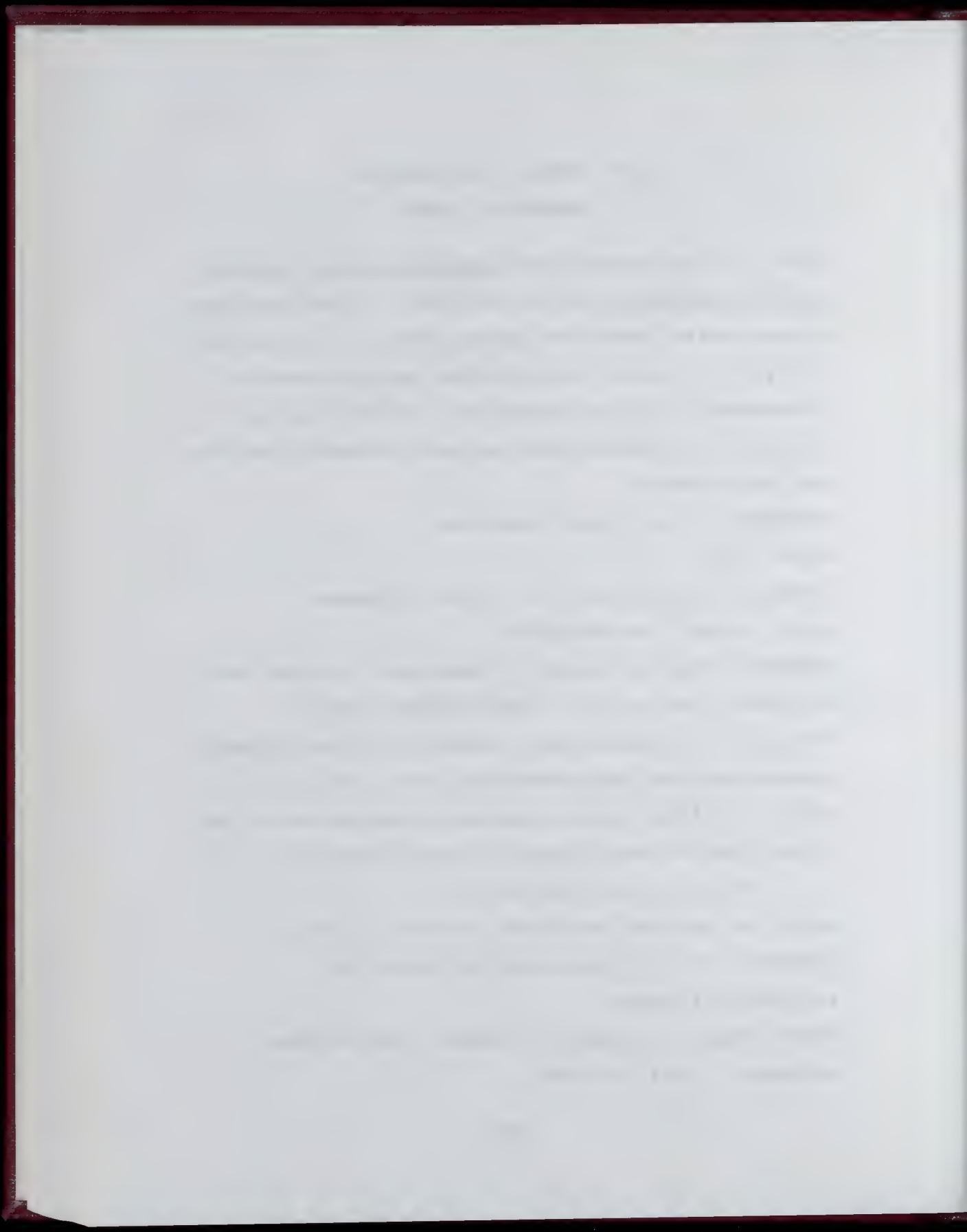
HERRMANN: Right at the end, I referred to the next book I was asked to write. But I had no direct plans to continue. In a general way, certainly, but what actually happened was that they asked me to write a book on Berlin. A little book in a series of publications by the [Staatliche] Bildstelle about--I think--German towns, and one of them would have been Berlin.

SMITH: So was that book to be a history of Berlin?

HERRMANN: Yes. A history and, of course, the architectural history.

SMITH: Right. So kind of a Michelin kind of guide?

HERRMANN: A sort of guide?



SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: Well, do you know Berühmte Kunststätte? No?

SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: Well, that was a series much older, on Paris, on Rome, written by an art historian. And this would have been a serious modern edition of it. With very good pictures by the official Bildstelle.

SMITH: Was your professional interest as an art historian heading towards the study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture?

HERRMANN: Well, through that book and-- Of course, I retained the interest. No, I think I must have finished the book shortly before it [the series] was canceled. There wasn't much time for me to undertake it. Except that Berlin book that was the next job. And yes, it would [take] some time. It took me to research on Berlin, the development of Berlin. Very interestingly, the [inaudible] of Berlin and how they coped after 1817, when the economy was speeded up, with the housing problems-- And there was the main book by [Werner] Hegelmann, I think, on Berlin that was a standard recent work. It gave me a lot of information. Then the other book I used was that by the Architectural Association of British architects. They had a big volume on Berlin. And that was really a continuation of Hegelmann's book, because it focused on one town with



the problems of housing, going back to-- Right from the seventeenth century, the development of Berlin. The town represented absolutism and then changed over to the representative town of the German Reich. But mainly the problems of housing.

SMITH: Okay. Perhaps we could talk a little bit about the Bauhaus and your relationship with the Bauhaus. I know you have said it was relatively minor, but perhaps you could just tell us--

HERRMANN: I enjoyed--and my wife [Anni Marx Herrmann], we both enjoyed--the relationship to the Bauhaus. It must have happened perhaps through the personal relationship I had through some particular Bauhaus pupil. But then they also-- What I had written in Kunst und Künstler must also have eased my way. In any case, I was asked when the Bauhaus in Dessau was opened and they had a big festival there. We took part. We stayed at that particular time with the Albers [Josef and Annie]. I met, in the course of that evening, everybody. [Walter] Gropius, [Kurt] Schwitters, possibly [Henry] van de Velde, although I don't remember him. But Schwitters I particularly remember. And I must have been there several times, a few times. Now, I'm not quite sure. The Bauhaus, then-- I don't know whether you know that-- The Swiss man took over.

SMITH: Hannes Meyer?



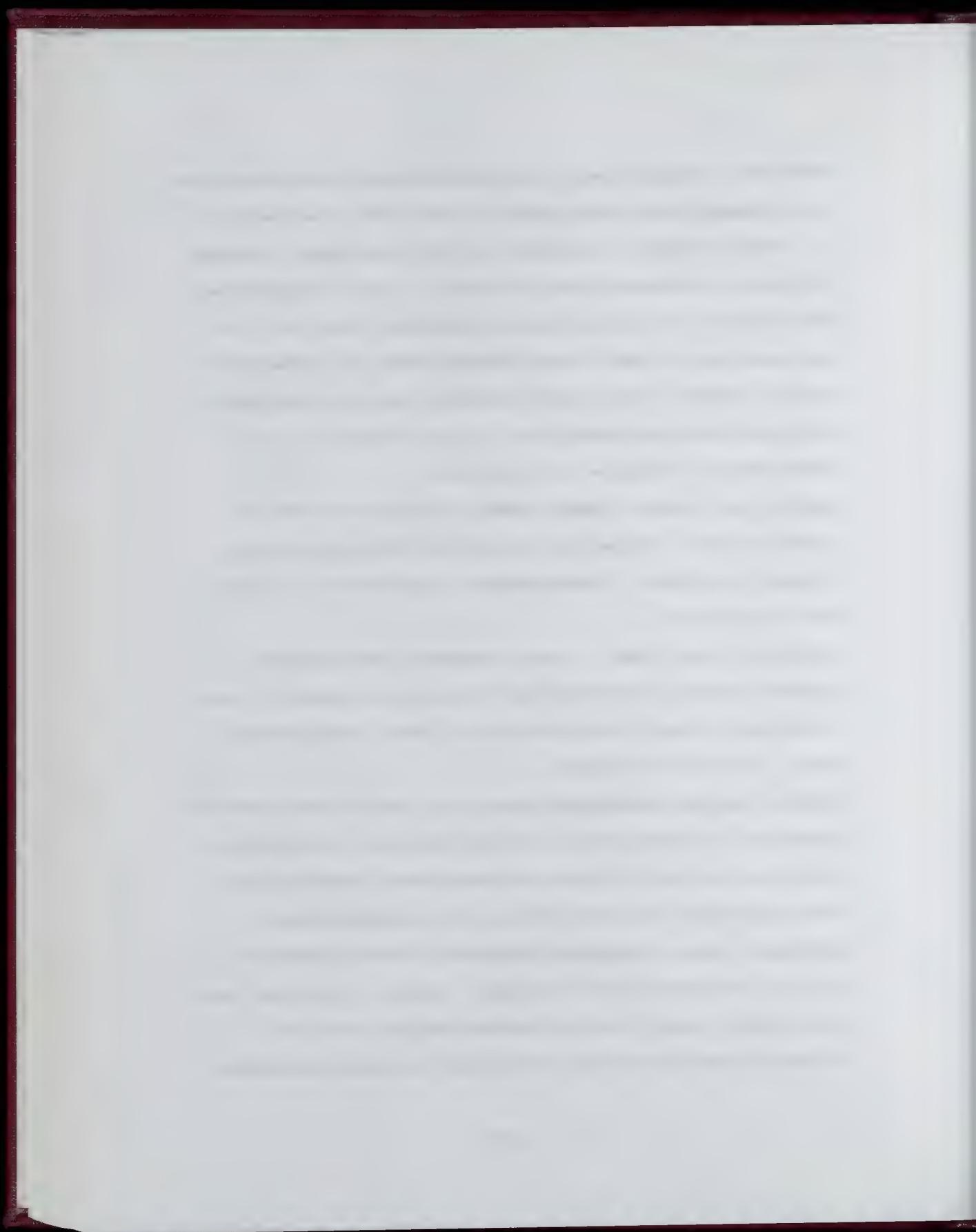
HERRMANN: Hannes Meyer. And Hannes Meyer's building-- Was it in Dessau where they built? I know that I wrote about it. The one thing I remember is that on purpose, instead of having a representative entrance, he put a big chimney stack up for the boiler house or whatever that was. So that was just--- And I liked Hannes Meyer and understood what he wanted. But I don't remember how that related. That must have been very late. Do you happen to know Hannes Meyer? Gropius must have left.

SMITH: As I recall, Meyer came in '27 and then he was fired in 1930. Dessau was one of the first places in Germany to go Nazi. Hannes Meyer in particular, I think, was a communist.

HERRMANN: Yes. Yes. I don't remember the sequence. I remember exactly when that new Bauhaus was opened. I was there and I think I wrote about it. And I knew Hannes Meyer, knew what he wanted.

SMITH: You had mentioned before that [Karl] Scheffler had asked you to write articles on contemporary architecture. Could you tell me a little bit more about Scheffler and what periodical you were writing for, in particular?

HERRMANN: Well, Scheffler belonged to [Kurt] Glaser's circle, and that's how I met him. He was, of course, much older than I was. And he liked to help a young art historian who he knew was interested in modern buildings.



So from time to time he asked me to write an article.

SMITH: For Kunst und Künstler?

HERRMANN: For Kunst und Künstler. These were the main articles. And from time to time some other society or some other journal asked me because I was known as a keeper in the [Staatliche] Kunstabibliothek [Berlin]. But they were minor articles. The Kunst und Künstler had a good general standard. Not particularly modern. We were not in the avant-garde. But he asked me to write about the Tauts [Max and Bruno], to go to and write about the new Freibad in Wannsee. And also when I went to London, to write about London.

SMITH: After you had emigrated?

HERRMANN: No. Before.

SMITH: Oh, before.

HERRMANN: I think I went on my first journey to England privately. Scheffler heard about it and said I should write an article. That was in London, where the end of the general strike-- It was just past, but there were restrictions still.

SMITH: That was '26, 1926.

HERRMANN: And one restriction affected me. There were no advertising lights; they were not allowed. And that was one aspect which was very interesting for me. A big attraction of London. So I think I saw, of course, the



advertisements, but they were never lighted. And I think in that article I pretended that I had seen them.

Something I wrote which was not quite true. [laughter]

SMITH: Did you continue to travel to England? Did you have connections in England?

HERRMANN: No. Not in art history.

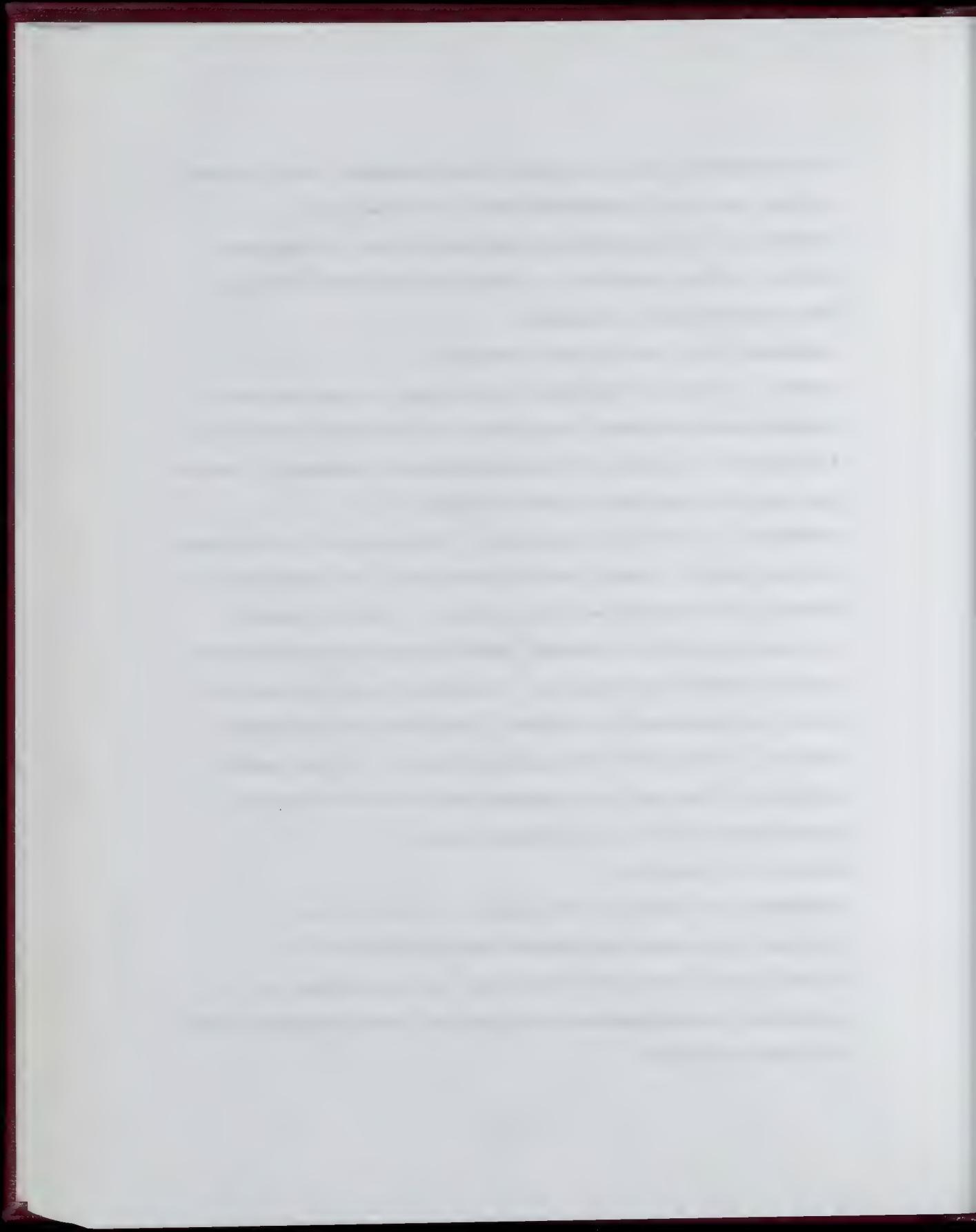
SMITH: In some of the other interviews I have done with German-Jewish émigrés, there seems to have been kind of an Anglophilia in parts of the German-Jewish community. Would you say that was true in your circle?

HERRMANN: I know what you mean. "Anglophilia" is too much for the people I knew. But England was-- The connection of Hamburg with England was very strong. I had an uncle [Arthur Kirstein] in Hamburg, and the way he ran his house and his meals--very English. His wife [Julia Kirstein], I think, was educated in England. And that was typically Hamburg. That wasn't the same in Berlin. It was quite different. But yes, it happened that my father-in-law [Adolf Marx] had business connections.

SMITH: Oh. Anni's--

HERRMANN: So that was one reason for immigrating to England. He immigrated before and we followed.

SMITH: Okay. Perhaps to get back to the Bauhaus, I understand another person that you had some connection with was Johannes Itten.



HERRMANN: Not at that time. I must have met him, but not at that time. Much later. Our son [Frank Herrmann] wanted to become a photographer. But the story I tell you now about Itten is almost fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years later. Our son wanted to become a photographer, and in London there was no good school. So we knew of Zürich--good school. Its director was Itten, and Itten introduced the Bauhaus system of education. I must have known about it, and Frank went there. There, in connection with his education, I met Itten.

SMITH: I see.

HERRMANN: Actually, he, our son, Frank, had difficulties in following the German language. There was the danger that he couldn't go on. So I went to Zürich and saw Itten, talked to him, and explained my son's difficulties. Itten was very understanding and let him go on. That's where I really met him.

SMITH: This was in the late 1940s?

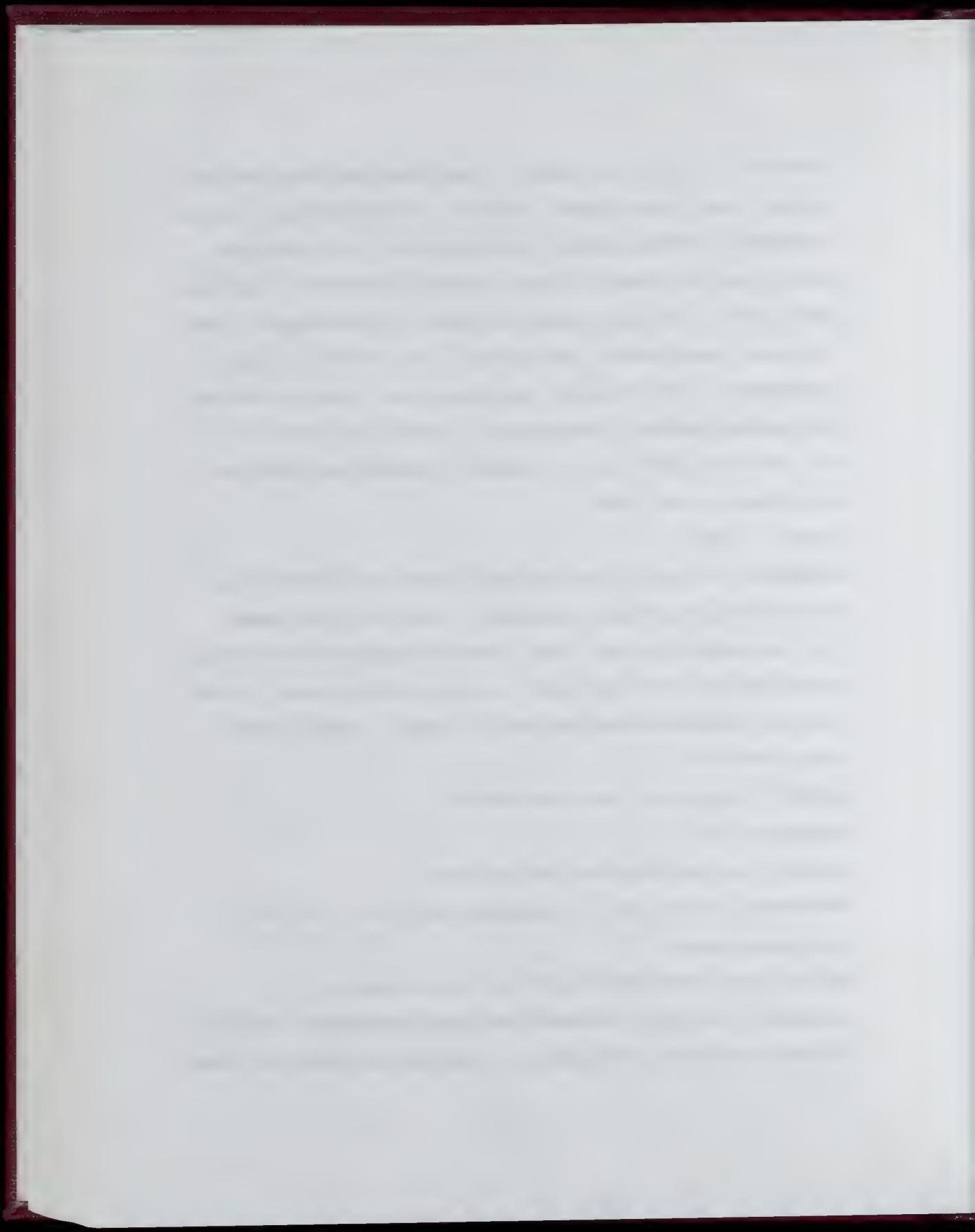
HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: How many children do you have?

HERRMANN: I have two. A daughter and a son, two-and-a-half years apart.

SMITH: When were they born? And their names?

HERRMANN: The girl, Barbara [Herrmann Weinberger] was born in Berlin in '30. She went to kindergarten there and spoke



fluent German. The boy was six months old when we went to England. So [there is] this difference, at least linguistically, between the two. Whereas Barbara is fairly perfect in--not completely--but fairly perfect in German, Frank, the boy-- You would think he is quite good, but he can't express himself really. [laughter] So that is--  
SMITH: Could you just tell me a little bit what kind of careers they have followed?

HERRMANN: She, Barbara, after school became a designer, decorative designer. Worked for some time with Marx and Spencer in their design center. And then she met her future husband [Harry Weinberger]. They married. Then she had a child [Joanna Weinberger], our granddaughter. My son-in-law--her husband--is a painter and teacher at art schools. So they moved from one town to the other, or two or three changes. And when the daughter was probably in her teens and my daughter, Barbara, became free of the cares for the child, she decided to study social anthropology. She made, eventually, an M.B. and other grades. Gradually, she was very successful as a social anthropologist. At the moment her main subject is law and order in the nineteenth century. It just happened to be one project she did. And then it happened that this, politically--with the strikes, police strikes--became very important. So there is a big circle of people all over the



world working on that subject. So at the moment she is asked from one country to another to give a lecture or attend a conference. So she is very successful there.

SMITH: What is your son-in-law's name? You said he was a painter.

HERRMANN: He is a painter. The name is Weinberger. He is a pupil of another painter who was close to die Brücke and his paintings are-- You would recognize them to be German.

SMITH: But he is British? Your son-in-law is British, right?

HERRMANN: He was born in Berlin. Part of his younger years--I don't know why--they went to Czechoslovakia. And then from Czechoslovakia he went to England and to the uncle of his brother. And that uncle of his brother happened to marry the sister [Suse Koppel] of my wife, so there was already some connection. And there they met and married. He is a painter. Quite successful, but not outstanding. But very, very involved and very intense in these paintings. So this is Barbara.

And the son-- I had a brother [Klaus Herrmann] who went, eventually, to New York and became a photographer with [Alfred] Eisenstaedt. A big firm, a big press photography. Very well known. And one consignment, just after the war, he came to England. Frank was a boy and was deeply impressed by his uncle and his photographic



experience. He said he wanted to become a photographer and he really stuck to it. He went to Zürich and came back and eventually became a photographer of the Sunday [London] Times and worked for the Sunday Times for twenty years or even more, until a few years, two or three years ago. He decided to give that up and become an independent freelance photographer.

SMITH: Photojournalism, still?

HERRMANN: General photography. He is well known and quite successful and travels all over the world.

SMITH: I am glad that we got some background on that. Let's go back to Berlin in 1930, at the time you were writing your book, the Deutsche Baukunst. I wanted to get just briefly what your personal relation was with several of the more well-known architects and your historical evaluation of these men and their work. Partly in terms of how you evaluated them at the time, and if your attitude has changed as you look back. First I wanted to ask you about Ludwig Hilbersheimer.

HERRMANN: Well, I better say it generally. With the work I was doing, with the article I was writing, the interest I took in modern architecture-- I met Hilbersheimer, I met [Max] Taut, I met [László] Mohóly-Nágy, I met [Ludwig] Mies van der Rohe, I met the whole lot. It sounds marvelous. But I told you before, if you ask me Hilbersheimer, yes, I



met him. I have no recollection of him.

SMITH: Well, that's okay.

HERRMANN: And even Taut, whom I met-- I know I met both of them [Max and Bruno]--I think--and we went over his buildings and talked about it. Or Mies van der Rohe I only met at these evenings at Glaser's. But when you ask what you want to know, there we come to what I warned you of. Because I know I can't tell you at all an impression I had of Hilbersheimer one way or the other.

SMITH: That's fair. That's fine.

HERRMANN: All I can say is that they interested me, or their buildings interested me. And in a general way, I have-- I believe that I thought and judged buildings on whether there was something which could lead to a further development, not that this is now wonderful. I went on Saturday to the Santa Monica Museum of Art.

SMITH: Oh, the Frank Gehry building?

HERRMAN: On Main Street.

SMITH: Right. It's a contemporary art museum.

HERRMANN: Yeah. Well, my reaction must have been, in a way, similar to what my reactions there were with modern buildings. Although this is much more avant-garde or modern than Hilbersheimer or them were. But I thought, "It's sad. This whole building is sad. That is no way for an architect to solve problems. He has a wonderful idea



how to make the building lively, shops and games, but he has an arrogance which is terrible." I only want to say that is very pronounced now. And much, much softer and much less outspoken would have been my attitude to modern at that time.

SMITH: Were there particular architects whose work you had a strong personal affinity for?

HERRMANN: It's funny, but Hannes Meyer, that is the one I remember. And I remember him-- Well, it must have been shortly before we left, I remember that was just finished. That is outside Berlin. That was a building I accepted at that time.

SMITH: Harry [Francis] Mallgrave mentioned to me that Mies van der Rohe and Gropius were rather on the conservative side of things in Berlin. Would you agree with that? Is that how you felt?

HERRMANN: No. I wouldn't. I didn't. At the time, I didn't think so.

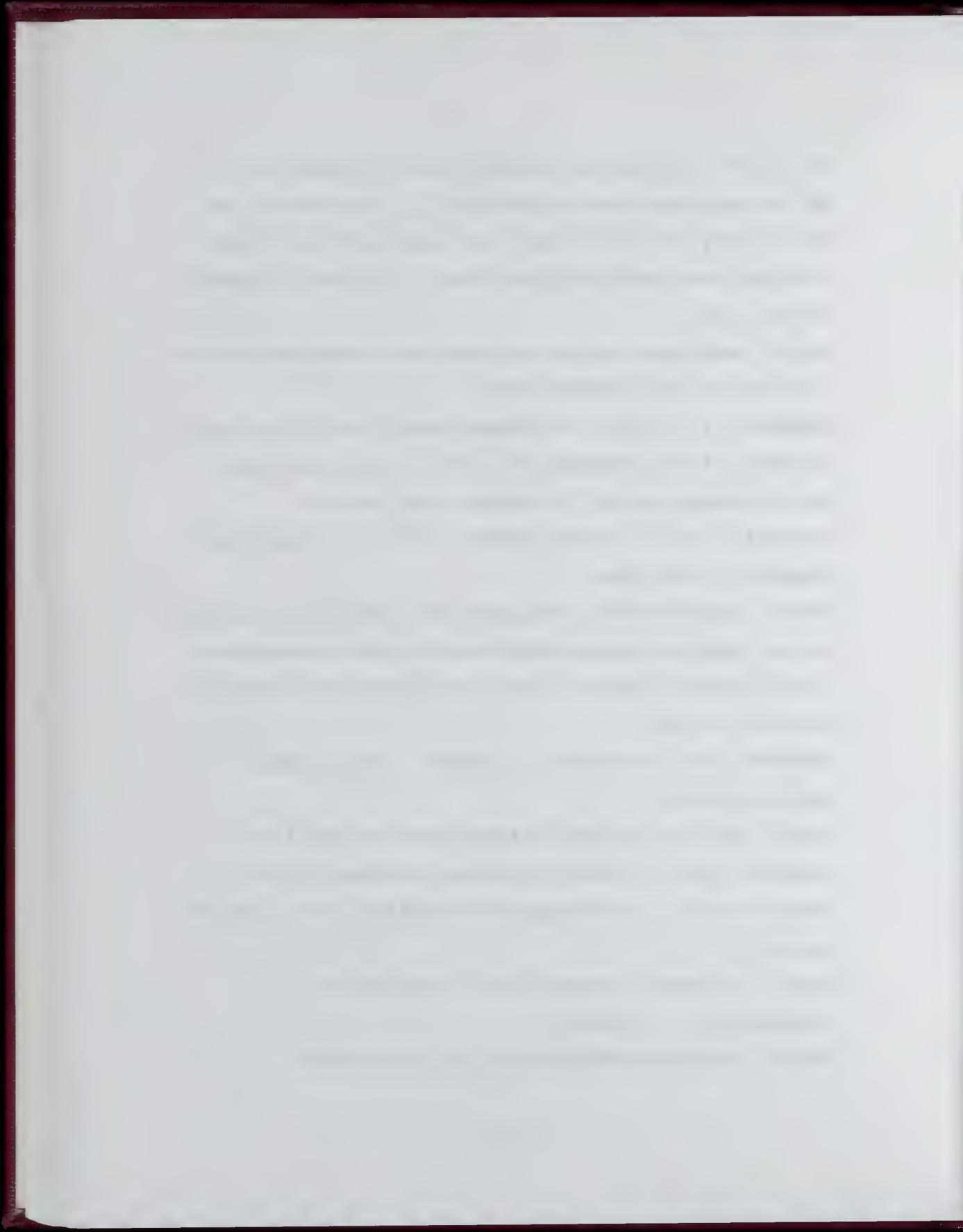
SMITH: What did you think of the Barcelona Pavilion?

HERRMANN: Well, it was a marvelous statement of what modern material, modern expression could do, but I haven't seen it.

SMITH: You didn't actually see it personally?

HERRMANN: No. I haven't.

SMITH: It's been reconstructed now, permanently.



HERRMANN: Yes. I know.

SMITH: So you just saw the illustrations and so forth.

What about Heinrich Tessenow? Did you know him?

HERRMANN: No. I didn't.

SMITH: In the book, you say he is more sachlich than those that produced reinforced concrete apartment houses.

HERRMANN: Sachlich. Yes. Good.

SMITH: Is his work where your personal sympathies lay?  
The direction of his work?

HERRMANN: I wish it would have been. What I mean is it would be nice to know that at that time I knew Tessenow's value. Because generally in that circle of modern architecture, Tessenow was past.

SMITH: Considered past, yeah.

HERRMANN: The past.

SMITH: He was, I believe, opposed to-- In some ways he was opposed to what later came to be called the International style. He did believe in a national architecture.

HERRMANN: Yes. National and traditional architecture.

SMITH: Was he connected with the Heimatstil?

HERRMANN: I don't know. I don't think so. I don't know.

SMITH: Let's see. What did you feel about the--? Were you following what was happening in other countries? Were you following Corbusier in France or what was developing in the United States?



HERRMANN: I don't think so.

SMITH: For instance, [Richard] Neutra published his book Wie Baut Amerika? I think in 1929.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: No?

HERRMANN: Difficult to say. Of course, at one time I knew and was interested in Corbusier. And in America [Louis] Sullivan, also. But I now can't say whether that was a new interest in the thirties or forties or whether it was already in the twenties. I don't know.

SMITH: That's fair. I think actually the term "the International style" was first used in '33, 1933. It's perhaps not until then that people become conscious of modern architecture as something that is international.

Okay.

It seems that many of these architects, or all of the avant-garde architects, were left-wing in their politics. Do you have any ideas why that might have been?

HERRMANN: That they were--?

SMITH: Left-wing, they were either socialists or communists.

HERRMANN: It would be very likely. As you said, Hannes Meyer was one. There are more than there should have been.

SMITH: Did you know Paul Schulze-Naumburg?

HERRMANN: No. I didn't know him, but he was, in my



feeling, past. I mean, that was something I didn't think had any future. No. I rejected Schulze-Naumburg.

SMITH: Even before he--

HERRMANN: Before Nazi or anything, yeah. Yeah, that--

SMITH: I guess one of the things that conservative architects were trying to do--I mean, some of them, or many of them, became Nazis or at least supporters of the Nazi regime--was to put more emphasis on the past. Or to try to preserve the past in the present. In terms of the progressive architects and progressive critics such as yourself, how did you feel about what the relationship should be between the present and the past?

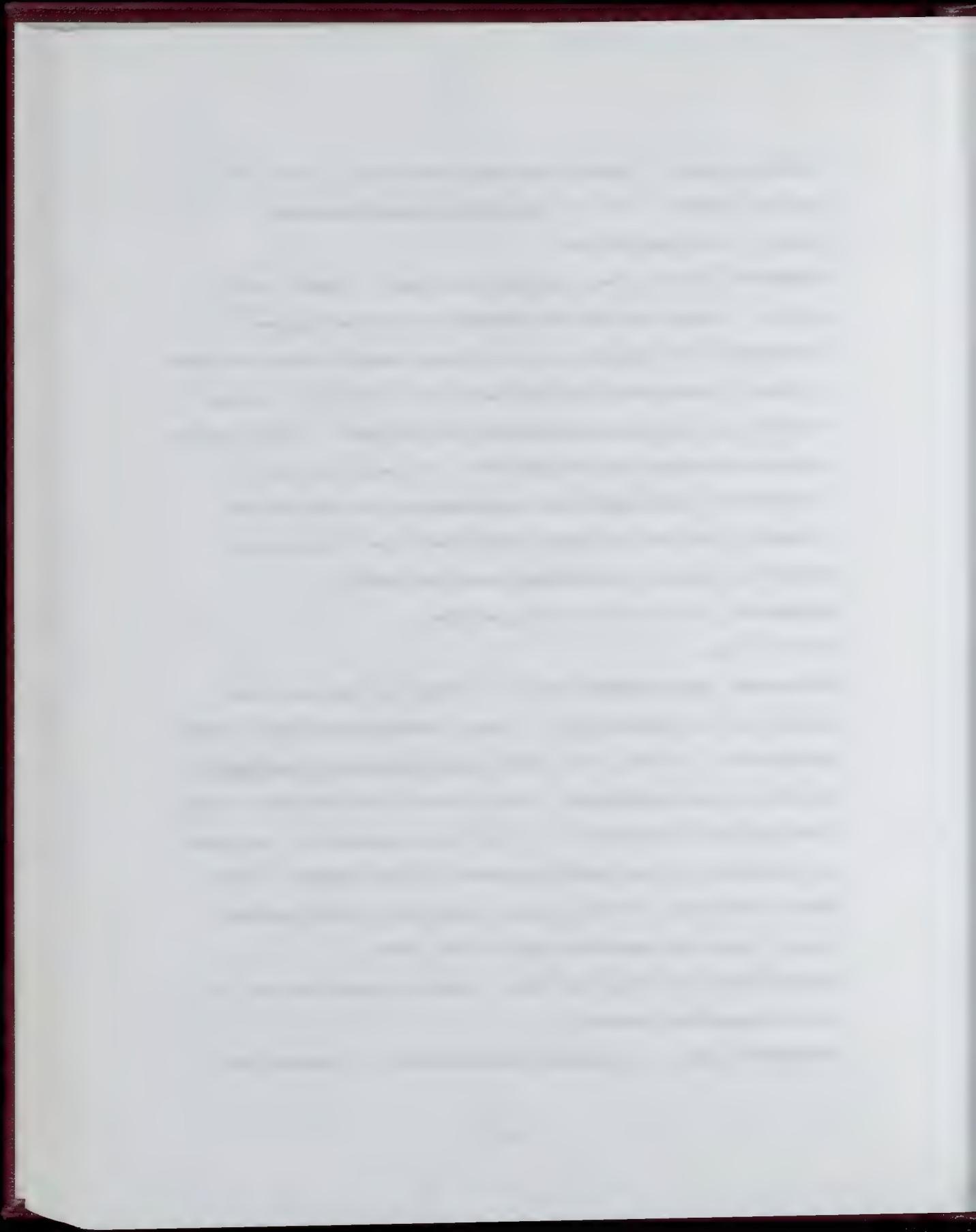
HERRMANN: It's quite a big question.

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: The present should be aware of the past and should try to develop it. I mean, there should be a close connection. I mean, the little book [Deutsche Baukunst] is based on this assumption. That I must have believed at the time and still believe. To know what happened in the past is important if you want to create in the present. Some would feel very critical today, [but] on a much reduced scale I had the same feeling at that time.

SMITH: What did you feel about symbolic architecture in the contemporary scene?

HERRMANN: What is symbolic architecture? I coined the



phrase, maybe in relation to [Gottfried] Semper, but that is my personal-- To give it a name. But is there symbolic architecture that exists? I don't know, in Jugendstil there probably is. But that is not the symbolic I meant. The symbolic I meant was to be symbolizing in architecture ideas of a general nature, not architectural ideas, but symbolizing the community, the state. That's why I talked about symbolic architecture.

SMITH: But don't you think the Nazis wanted to have architecture that symbolized their conception of the Aryan nation and state?

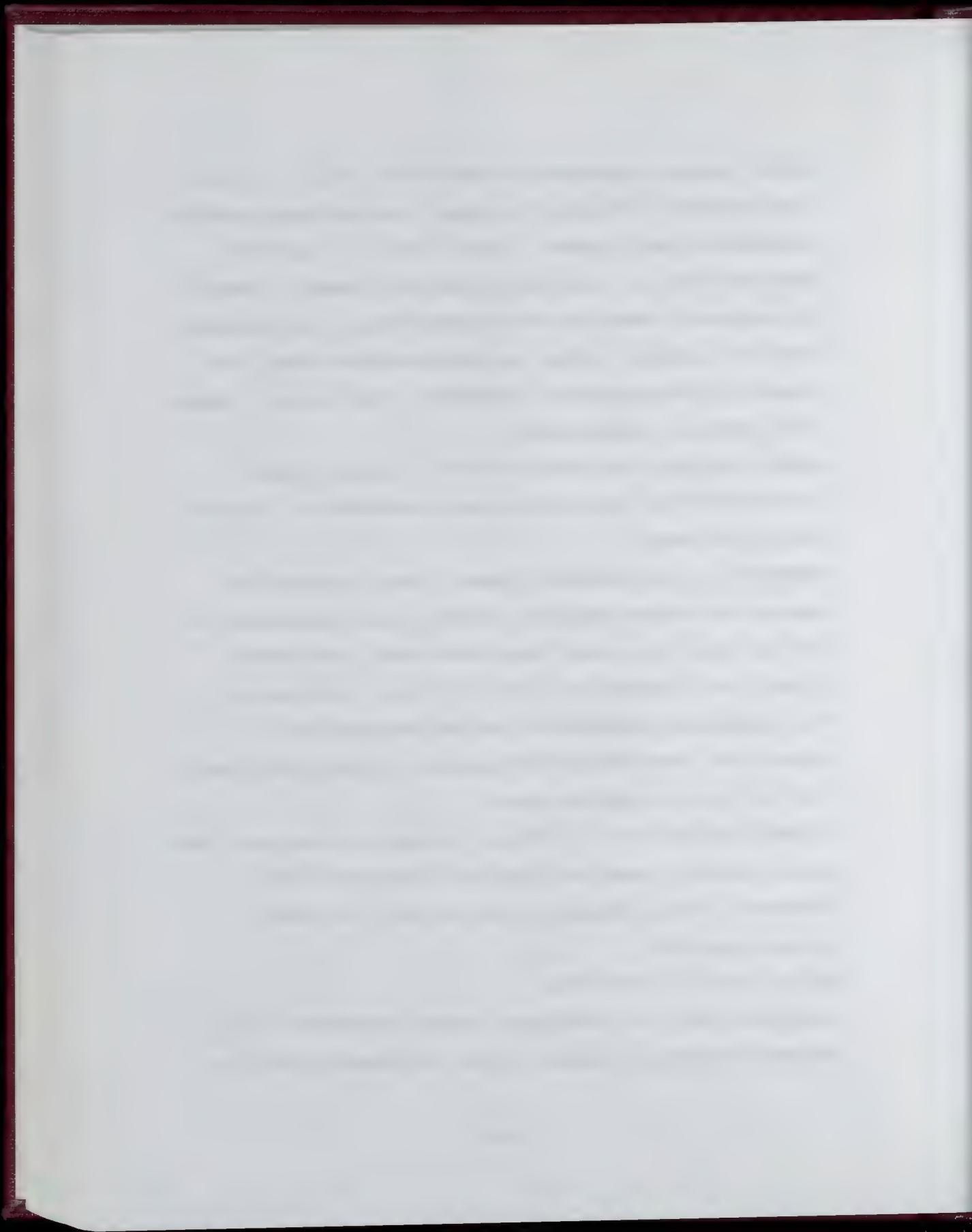
HERRMANN: It was mostly-- I mean, I was interpreting Semper, and Semper certainly wanted to give expression to the new role, the state, democratic state, the modern state. And I thought the whole Victorian architecture, Wilhelminische architecture, can be understood as symbolizing these factors and powers. It would be a way to look at it in a positive sense.

SMITH: Did you feel, in terms of modern architecture, that symbolism was a negative thing or a positive thing?

HERRMANN: Today, generally, do you mean? Is that a general question?

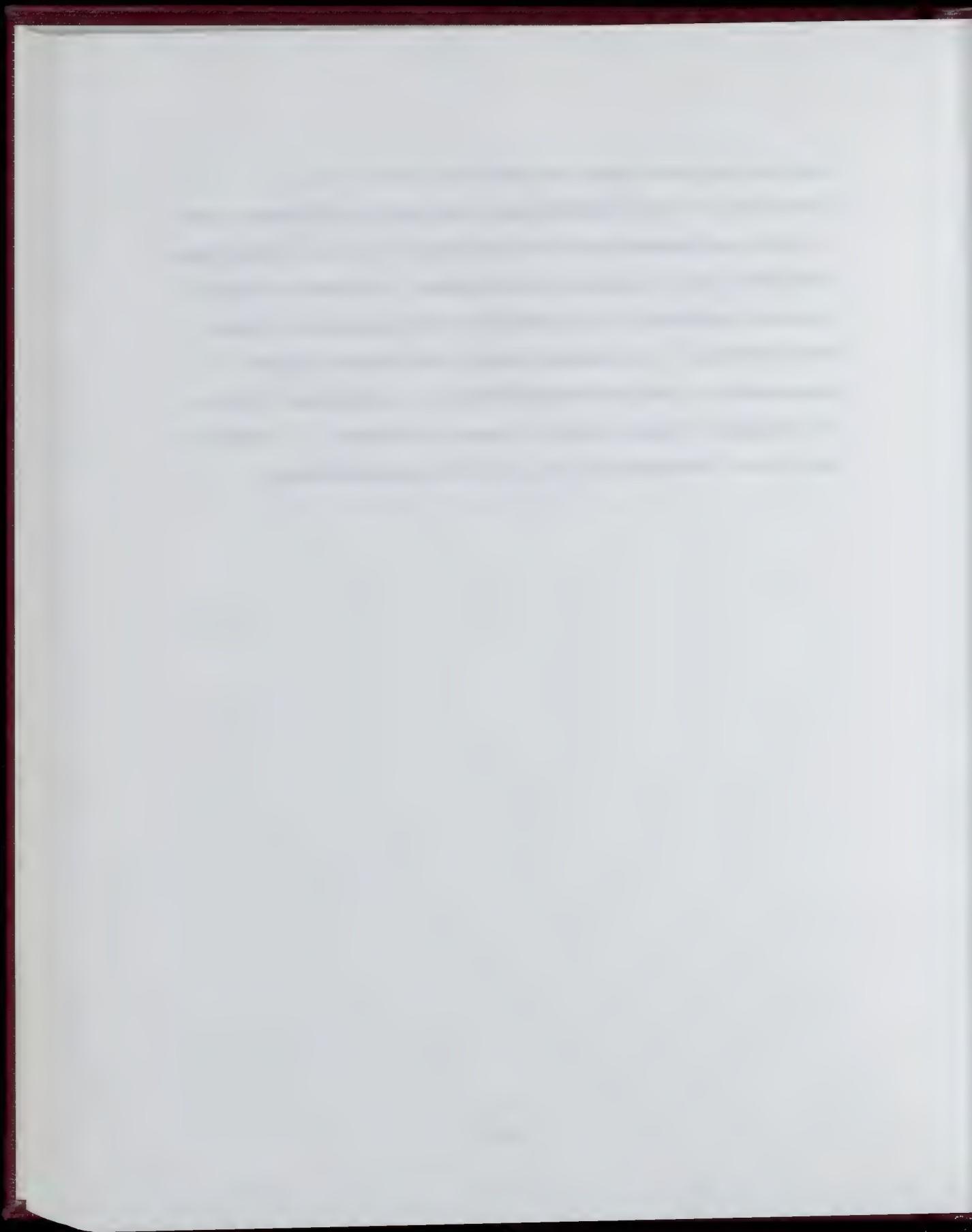
SMITH: Well, in the 1920s.

HERRMANN: Well, at that time, modern architecture does express something, whatever it is. My dispute today with



some modern architects is that they reject that.

[According to such architects] architecture is either good or bad, and fascist architecture doesn't exist. They [the fascists] used classical architecture, and the most they [modern architects] will admit is that sometimes it was megalomaniac. But architecture is not there to give expression to any political [ideas] or otherwise. That's an argument I have today with some architects. I said it's not true. Whatever you do, you will express some--



TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE TWO

FEBRUARY 12, 1990

SMITH: What was the critical reaction to the first volume when it appeared?

HERRMANN: I don't know. I don't really know whether I got write-ups. The write-ups I remember much later.

SMITH: When it was reprinted?

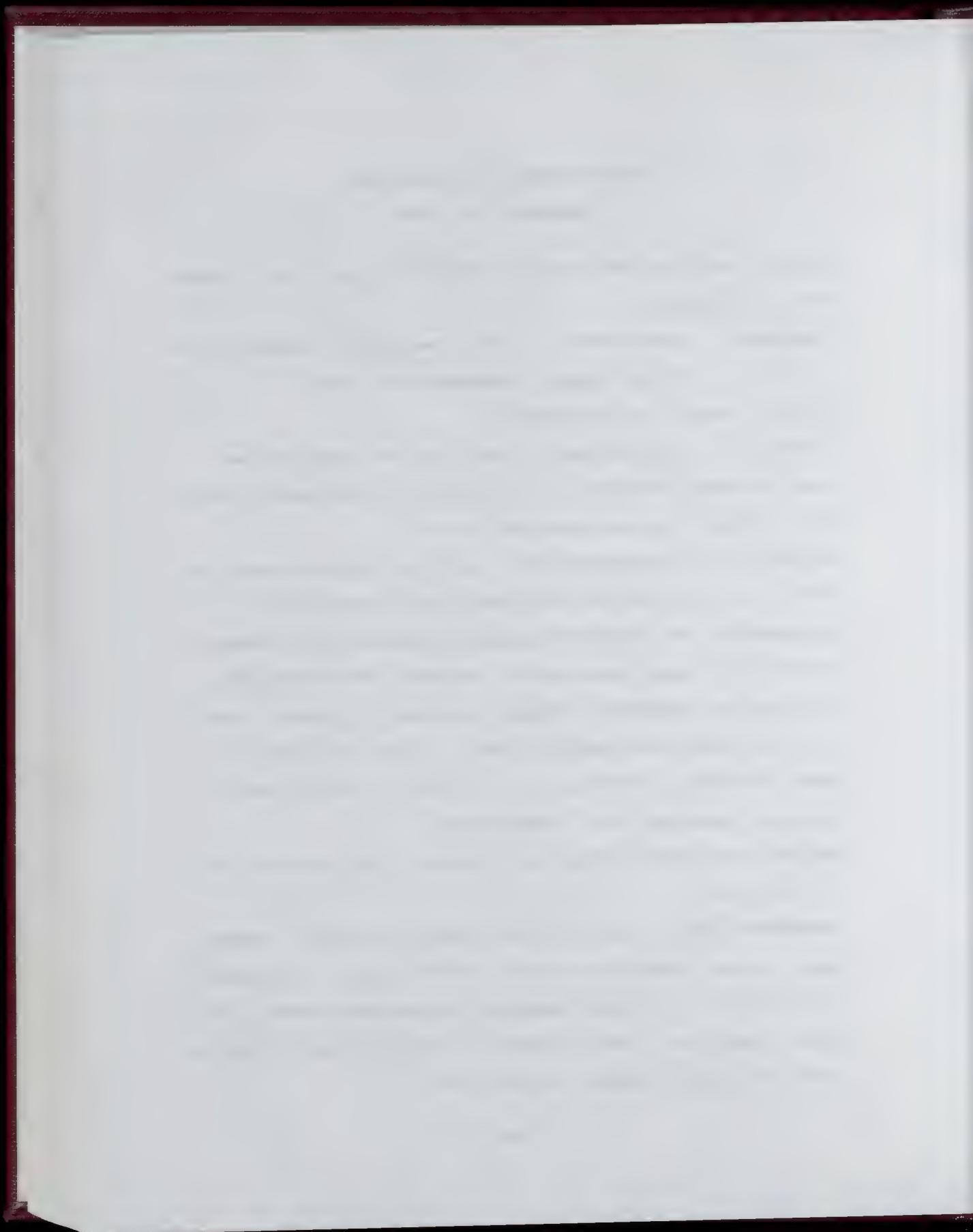
HERRMANN: [Hans] Sedlmayr. But that was after the war that Sedlmayr referred to that book very positively. But I don't think I had any reaction to it.

SMITH: Fritz Schumacher did a book on a similar topic in 1935. Are you familiar with that work? The history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture in Germany.

HERRMANN: I must have read it through. Fritz Schumacher is also the architect, Hamburg architect. I didn't like him very much, what he did. Well, I must have read and must have had a reaction to it. I don't think it was a positive reaction, but I don't know.

SMITH: What about [Siegfried] Giedion? Did you know him or his work?

HERRMANN: Well, I met him much later in Zürich. Giedion had, at that time--if he wrote at that time--no influence at all on me. I became aware of Giedion much later. No, I didn't meet him. That's wrong. He died before. I met his wife and Giedion people, but not him.



SMITH: At the time you were writing the book, in some ways you were breaking ground, but in other ways you were fitting into a dialogue that's developing on contemporary architecture. At the time you were writing the book, who would you say were the most influential architectural theorists and historians dealing with modern, contemporary architecture?

HERRMANN: I don't know. A strange thing is Otto Wagner. His theory I did not take in. I did not welcome it. I was very impressed by one work, the Postsparkasse, and still am. I think it is an outstanding work. But I know my reaction to Jugendstil, so I must have-- I think in the book I mention him and there is an illustration of the Postsparkasse, but I picked that building out. His whole theory of modern architecture, I don't think I ever read it.

SMITH: It was a highly polemical field, it seems to me. At the time it was already highly polemical. It was a field with lots of debates going on in it. It was polarized. How did you see your book fitting into discussions on modern architecture?

HERRMANN: I don't know. I had the feeling that-- It was so closely bound to the nineteenth century, and there was nobody interested in the nineteenth century. I don't want to make the book more than it is, but the way I looked--in



a positive way--on Victorian architecture, that wasn't done. There weren't people who were interested. There was Joseph, a man who wrote two volumes on nineteenth-century architecture. A very useful book, but it is just a collection of buildings in historical order, all the buildings which were built. Very good and very useful, but it has nothing to do with my book. I don't think that anybody really had the idea that the twentieth century came out of the nineteenth century, and without the nineteenth century there wouldn't have been a twentieth century. That was, you know--

SMITH: I think at that time, to try to make that connection would have been very disturbing to a lot of people who wanted to think of modern architecture as a break with the past.

HERRMANN: Disturbing-- The way I write is-- I think it isn't aggressive, it isn't against the attitude of modern. So nobody would be disturbed by it. So then it was a very small publication. Much later, in 1977, when it was published again and I sent it to [Nikolaus] Pevsner, Pevsner wrote back a very nice letter. He said--and I may have mentioned it already--"Well, I see that you were more advanced than any of us." Which means at the time he didn't read it. [laughter] Even if he read the only volume which was published, that doesn't-- The main point



of the whole thing got lost if you didn't have the second volume.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: So you couldn't possibly have a reaction to what I wanted, to what I did try. And that had to wait until, I don't know, the seventies or so, when it was published completely. And then a man like Pevsner who was interested, who must have probably read what I said about [Karl Friedrich] Schinkel-- But only when they got both volumes-- Then they realized that it was written forty years ago.

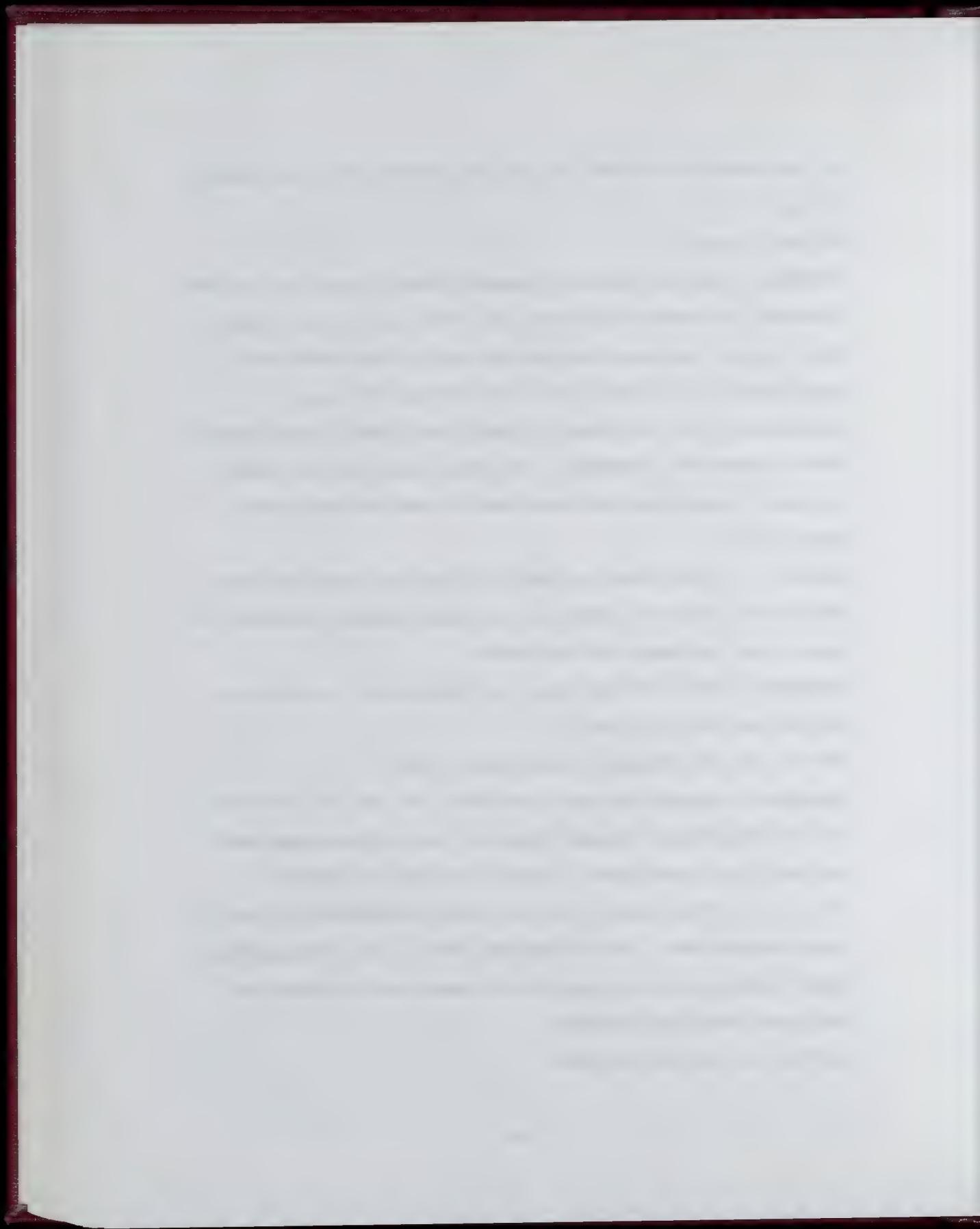
SMITH: I'd like also to talk a little bit about Wilhelm Waetzoldt, since he seems to have been fairly important in your life, at least at the time--

HERRMANN: Well, he was important because he was the man who helped me to my job.

SMITH: He was Glaser's boss, wasn't he?

HERRMANN: He was the boss, the top. He was the director of the Staatlichen Museen [Berlin], so my relations were not daily and not direct. But I saw him, of course, in relation to that book. He was a very understanding and a very helpful man. But I must say that I was disappointed that he did not try at all to do something to delay the decision about my dismissal.

SMITH: To get rid of you?



HERRMANN: To sack me. And others. He didn't do anything, but you couldn't really expect it from him. As I said, a man like [Ernst] Gall-- I'm not quite sure what his position was, but he also was a public servant. Well, he then went out of his way to visit me and to talk, really. Waetzoldt didn't do that, but you can't expect the general director of the Staatlichen Museen who got the order to sack certain people--and the order came more or less from Hitler--to come and tell me, "I'm terribly sorry, but I have to." It would be unfair to expect that.

SMITH: What did you think of him as an art historian? What was your assessment of him that way?

HERRMANN: I really mostly only know his book on art historians [Deutsche Kunsthistoriker], biographical, on [Franz] Kugler, and I liked that. I think that is very good. He was a good writer. And I must, by the way, have met him at Glaser's, too.

SMITH: Did you ever read his book Du und die Kunst?

HERRMANN: Du und die Kunst? I don't know.

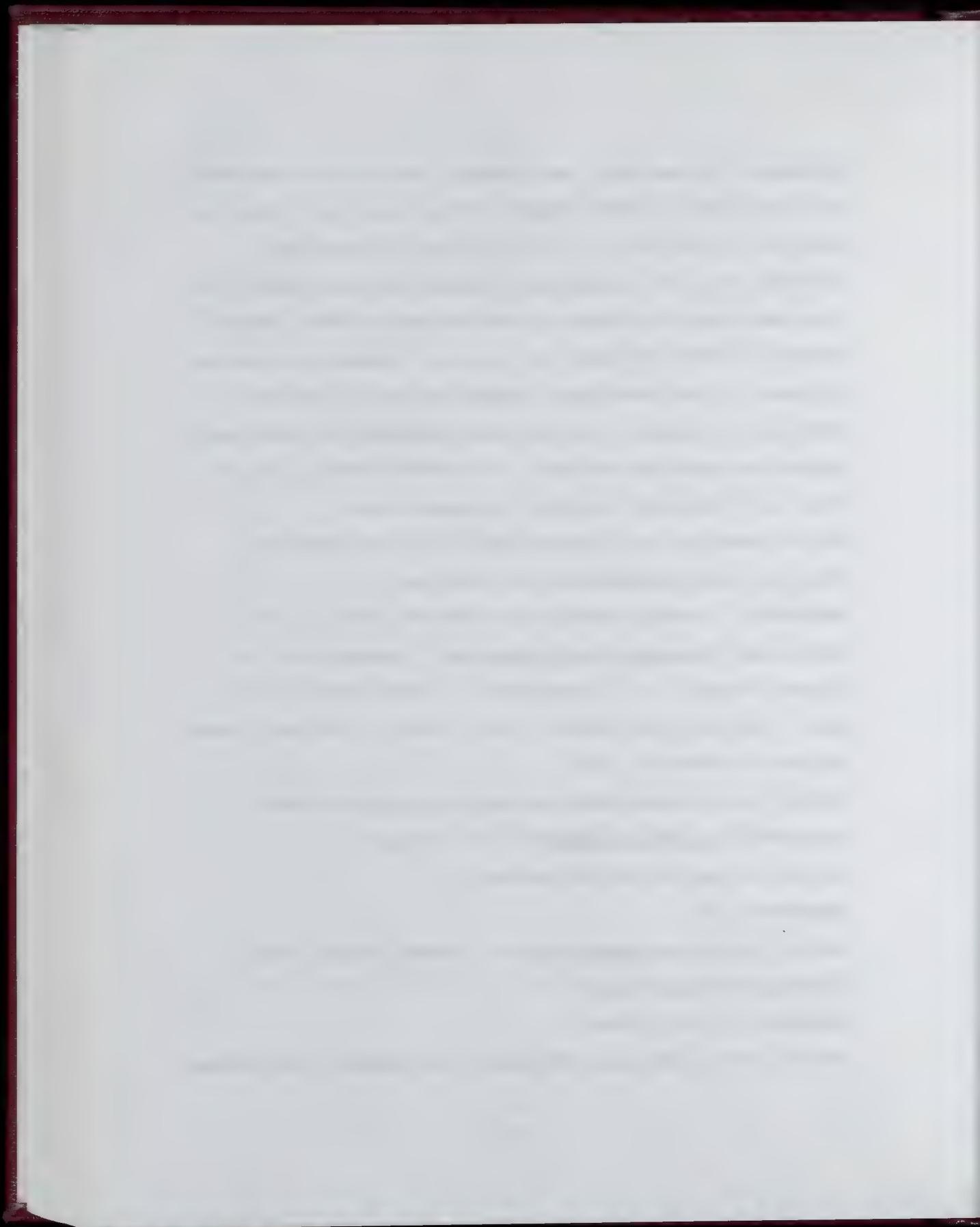
SMITH: Or any of his biographies?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Dürer [und siene Zeit] or [Hans] Holbein [der Jüngere: Werk und Welt]?

HERRMANN: I don't know.

SMITH: Let me ask you, why didn't the second volume appear



of the Deutsche Baukunst?

HERRMANN: It didn't appear because I was sacked. I must have received the prints--

SMITH: The galley's?

HERRMANN: The galley's already in the-- What we called die Umbruch. Ready to go to press. Shortly before May 1 in '33. And I didn't send them back, because I still had them. I didn't send them back, and they must have heard that I was sacked and that I was a Jew. So they said they wouldn't publish it. That was that. Exactly like Burkhard Meier. Just nothing. They just didn't.

SMITH: Was the first volume withdrawn from the series, do you know?

HERRMANN: That I don't know. Possible.

SMITH: And then what happened with your book on Berlin?

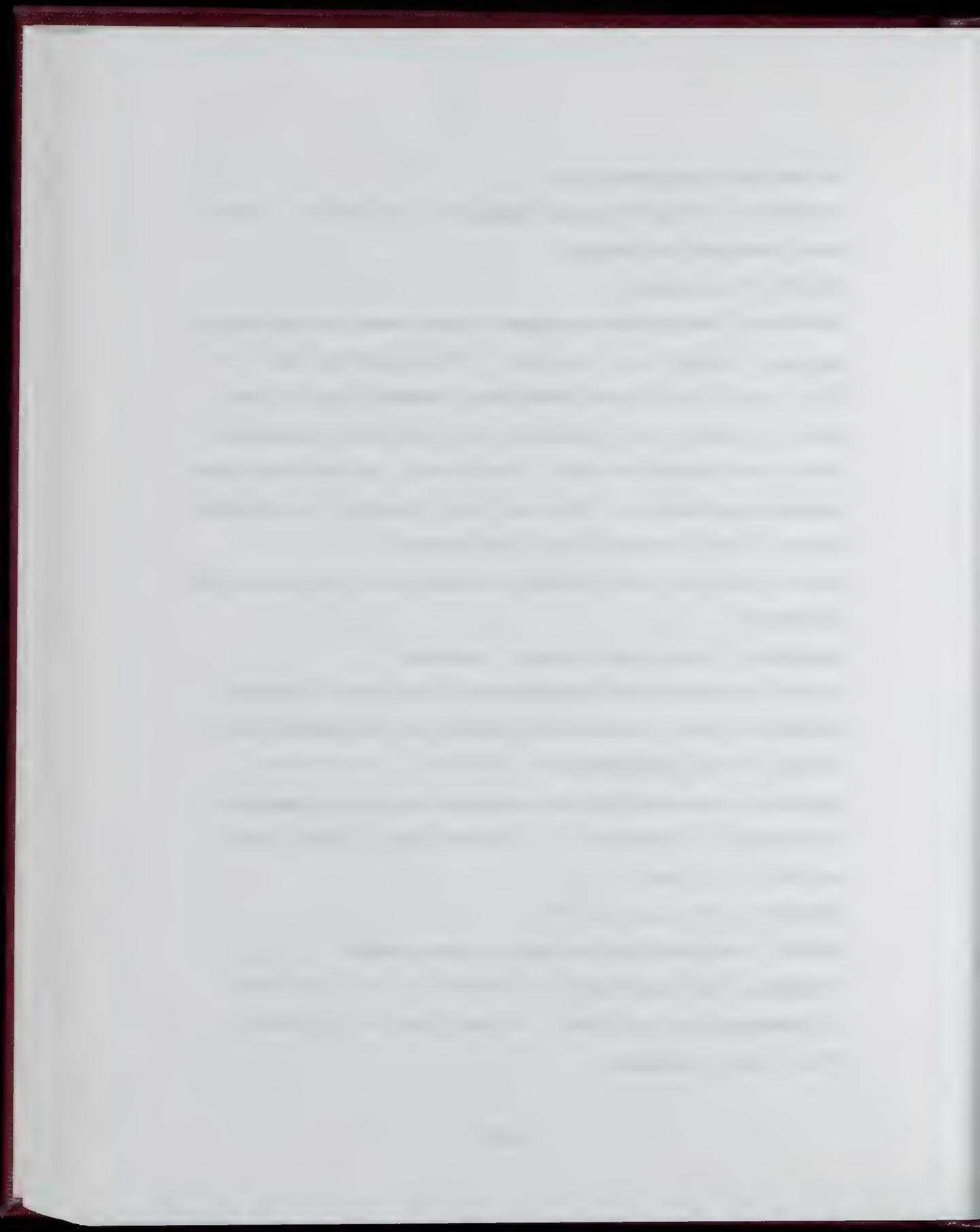
HERRMANN: Also, he--Burkhard Meier--got my manuscript, I think, of the introduction to the book. I'm not sure whether it was part of the introduction or the complete introduction. Whether it is here or not, I don't know.

SMITH: It is here.

HERRMANN: Did you see it?

SMITH: I'm going to look at it later today.

HERRMANN: But one could see whether it was a complete introduction or only part. In any case, he just said, "No. That's finished."



SMITH: Finished, yes. Again, that's because you were fired and because you were Jewish?

HERRMANN: Both. Both.

SMITH: But it's my understanding that other publishing companies continued to publish Jewish writers for a couple of years at least.

HERRMANN: But it needed some pluck to it. Burkhard Meier was a semi-official. So I would say, "All right, he was in a bit more vulnerable position." But Jedermanns Bücherei, of course, they could have continued to publish it. As other scholars or other-- Many continued.

SMITH: When did you begin to feel that the Nazis might take over the country?

HERRMANN: Nineteen thirty.

SMITH: Nineteen thirty?

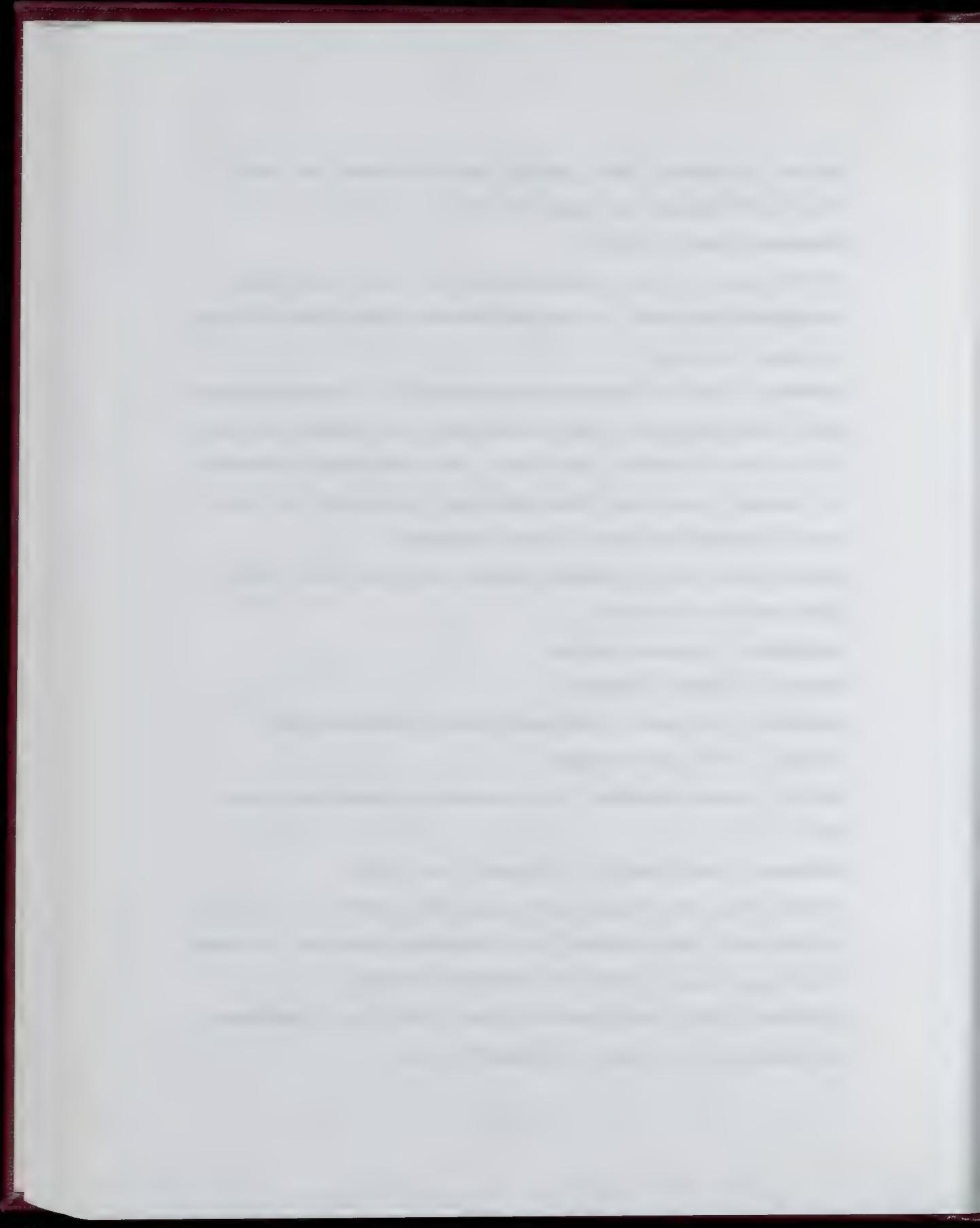
HERRMANN: Oh, yes. That was-- Well, take over the country, that is too much.

SMITH: Might possibly. Not necessarily that they would, but--

HERRMANN: But there is a danger. Yes, 1930.

SMITH: When did there start being Nazi pressure in terms of cultural institutions? For instance, when did you start feeling pressure within the Kunstabibliothek?

HERRMANN: Only that incident that I told you. Otherwise we were free to do what we wanted to do.



SMITH: The Nazis apparently wanted Waetzoldt to be fired because they claimed he was anti-German, for some reason. This was before '33. I'm not sure what happened after '33. Was Waetzoldt a progressive person? Conservative?

HERRMANN: Yes, he was a liberal person. Not particularly progressive. His daughter--I knew his daughter--impressed me because she studied strategy. [laughter]

SMITH: Military strategy?

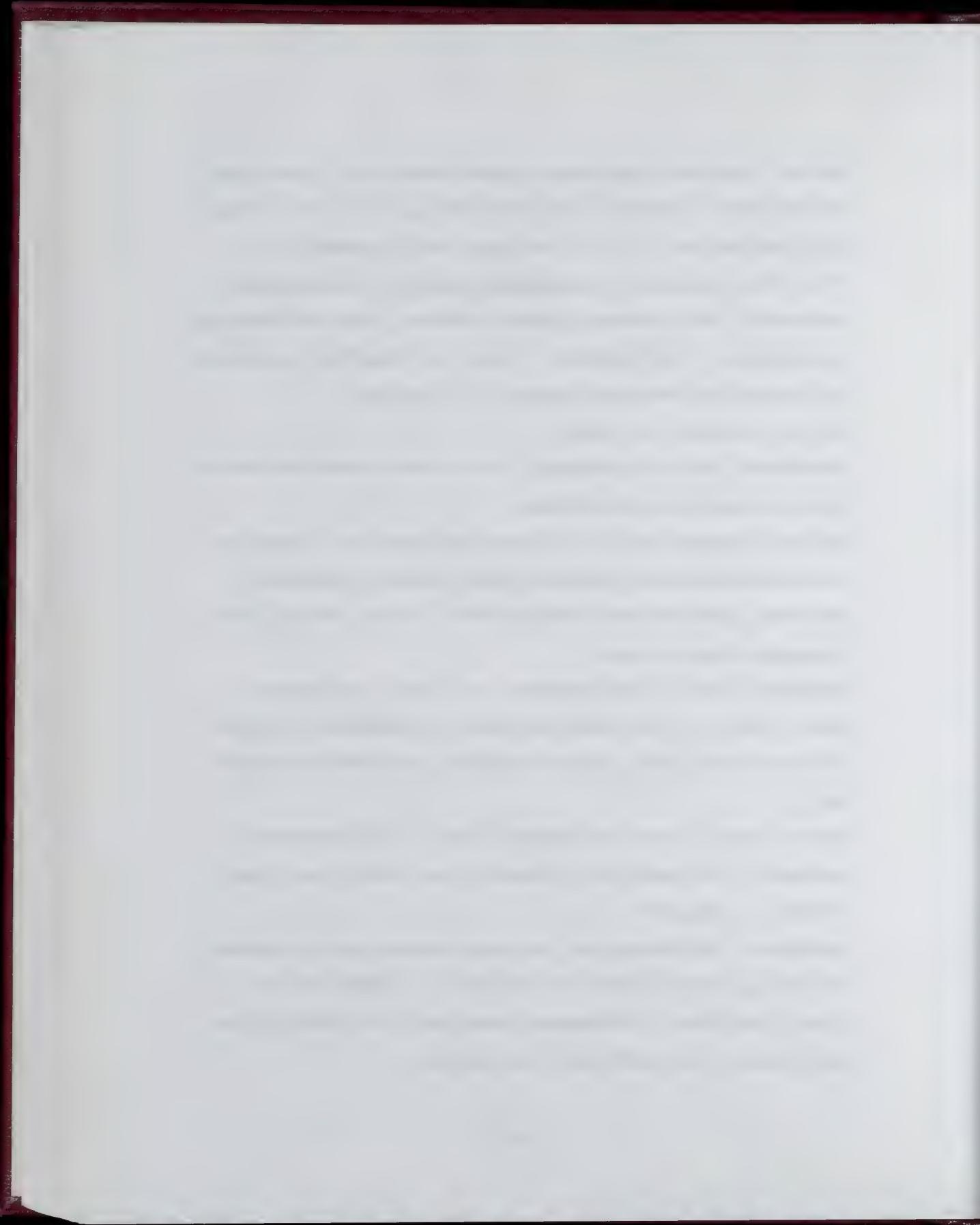
HERRMANN: Military strategy. But I don't know whether it has any bearing on her father.

SMITH: I guess what I am-- When you would go to work at the Kunstabibliothek, did you have a sense of pressure building prior to your being fired? Or were things going along as they had been?

HERRMANN: That it was coming? Oh, yes, I was aware of that. Still, I was surprised when it happened, in a way. You never knew when it would happen. But that was bound to.

SMITH: Well, let's talk briefly about your decision to emigrate. You said your father-in-law [Adolf Marx] was already in England?

HERRMANN: He already had business connections in London. He was a private banker and he went to London with his wife. And then in between he came back and talked to us and tried to persuade me to follow him.



SMITH: Was this after you had been fired or before?

HERRMANN: That was, I think, after. Yes.

SMITH: So you considered, even then, staying in Germany?

HERRMANN: I was hesitant to-- I told you before, I needed to tear up some roots. I don't think that I thought-- Many thought that, "It won't last. It will blow over. It will take a few months, or years even. And we'll stay." Many did, and many perished. That I never thought. But to decide to go and start a new life, that needed some-- Especially, for instance, now. The people from East Germany who immediately went to West Germany, these were young people--from the look of it--who just could put their things into a suitcase and set off. But older people-- And after all, I was at that time thirty-four, not really old, but I had a family and a house, and I had had a job for some time. Even today, the older people from East Germany also go easily off. It took some time. And then, of course, I had a wife who said, "I want to get out of here."

SMITH: What happened? Did your parents decide to--? Did they stay or leave?

HERRMANN: My father [Richard Herrmann] wasn't alive then. My mother [Anna Kirstein Herrmann] stayed and visited us in London, and then she went on a journey around the world visiting friends, etc., and got out just in time, in '38 or '39.



SMITH: Oh, after Kristallnacht.

HERRMANN: Just before Kristallnacht I think she got out. But she stayed. And in between, I went back once or twice.

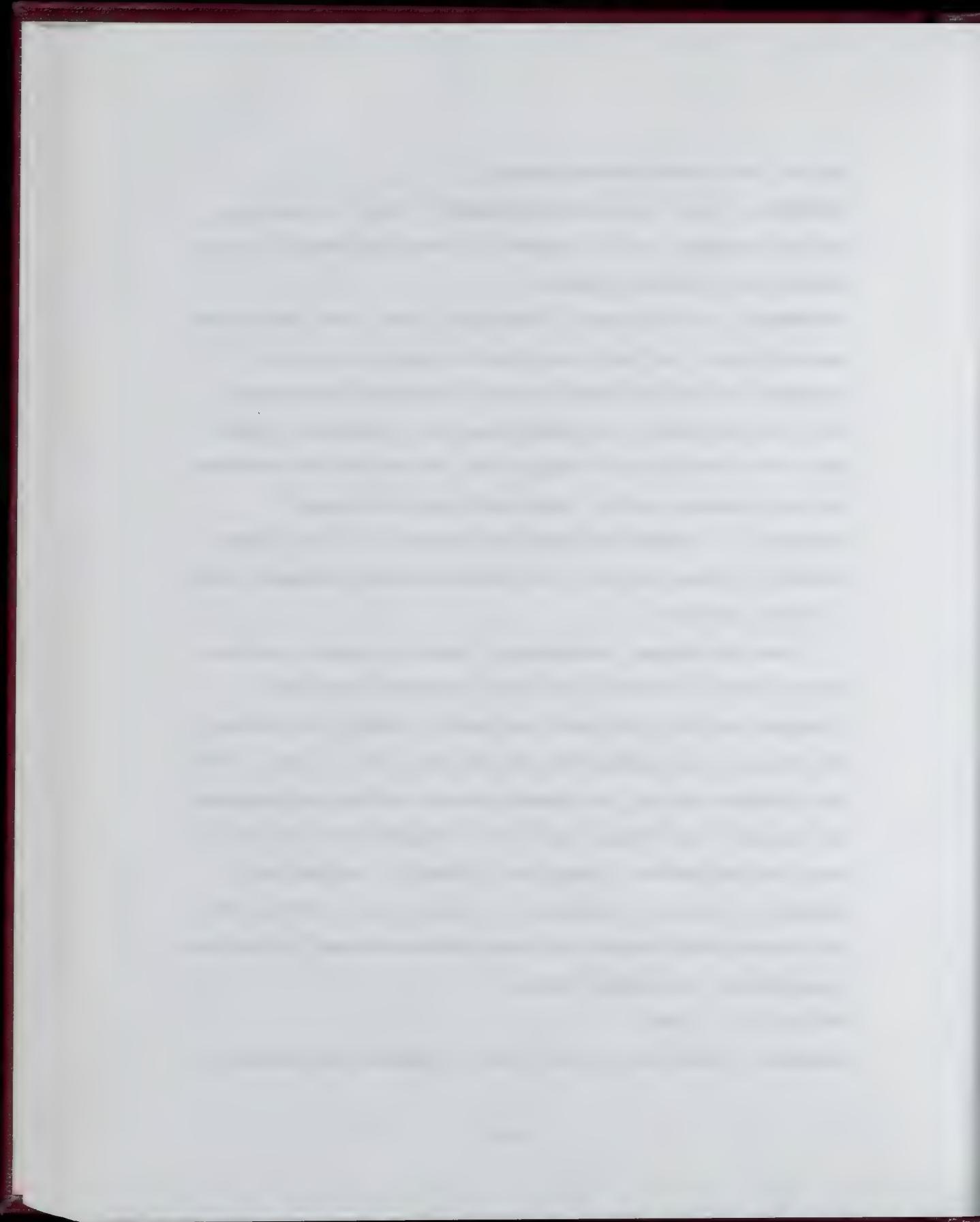
SMITH: Oh, you did go back?

HERRMANN: I did go back. One time I went back, Annie had appendicitis. We had a very good friend in Berlin, a surgeon. So we went back to Berlin for that operation. That was one time. The other time had a financial reason why-- The difficulty of emigrating was for me not affected by the financial side. That was a very fortunate position. I talked the other day about it; I don't know whether I talked to you. My father [Richard Herrmann] was a timber merchant.

And the timber from Poland, from the forest, went on floats down to Danzig, and there they were cut into sleepers and sold all over the world. So he, long before the Nazis-- Long after the war, he had-- No, it was in the war, during the war, he already had an office and business in Danzig. And at one time I was released from the army to work in that office. That was in Danzig. And he had capital in Danzig. Danzig was a free state. Both as far as currency and transfer of money was concerned, it was not regulated by the German state.

SMITH: Oh, I see.

HERRMANN: There was a free flow of capital from Danzig to



England. Well, then they had to be, of course-- My father wasn't alive anymore. He had a partner, and we came to an arrangement with the partner. But otherwise this money could be transferred to England. So when we went out, there was already that money. So we were in a quite extraordinary situation.

SMITH: You mentioned-- Well, I mean it's obvious that when you went to England you withdrew from art history.

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: You stopped being an art historian for a while, in a way. But it wasn't-- That means it wasn't because you needed money and had to do something else.

HERRMANN: No, no. I had to earn money. I couldn't live on my capital there. I had to earn money. I could have got a job at the Warburg [Institute]. Whatever they paid there wasn't very much. But still, they all did that, and they got through. I know from [Rudolf] Wittkower they had a hard time to get through, but they did. And, of course, I could have done that. But I-- That was the other reason that I started on something else. Because I had come to a point where this kind of art history--ascribing to works of art and to certain artists, and to date them correctly--I thought was unproductive. Probably without Hitler, I would have carried on, and hopefully I would have come to art history which was more to my liking. But since I had to



break-- I lost my job and I had to break with Germany and my activities there. Then I came in addition to [the decision] that now is the time to do something else. Not art history.

SMITH: Were you going through a personal crisis? I mean, it sounds like there was a personal crisis that was happening on top of the political crisis.

HERRMANN: Yeah, yeah. Completely personal. No, it was--

SMITH: You weren't happy with what you had been doing completely?

HERRMANN: Yes. It must have been that I couldn't see how I could make art history more interesting. Obviously, I didn't see it. Twenty years later I did. And since I only could-- The few memories I have, I'm quite definite that I knew that. In addition to all the reasons why one should go to England and break with the past was the distinct feeling, "That is the end. I get rid of art history, too." Very certainly.

SMITH: Did you keep in contact with any of your friends from Germany? Art historians?

HERRMANN: Art historians? I knew Wittkower in Berlin. We had common friends and met there. And when we came to England, Wittkower also had gone out of Germany about the same time. And there were other friends. Also a cousin [Franz Osborn] of mine. And they lived together in a



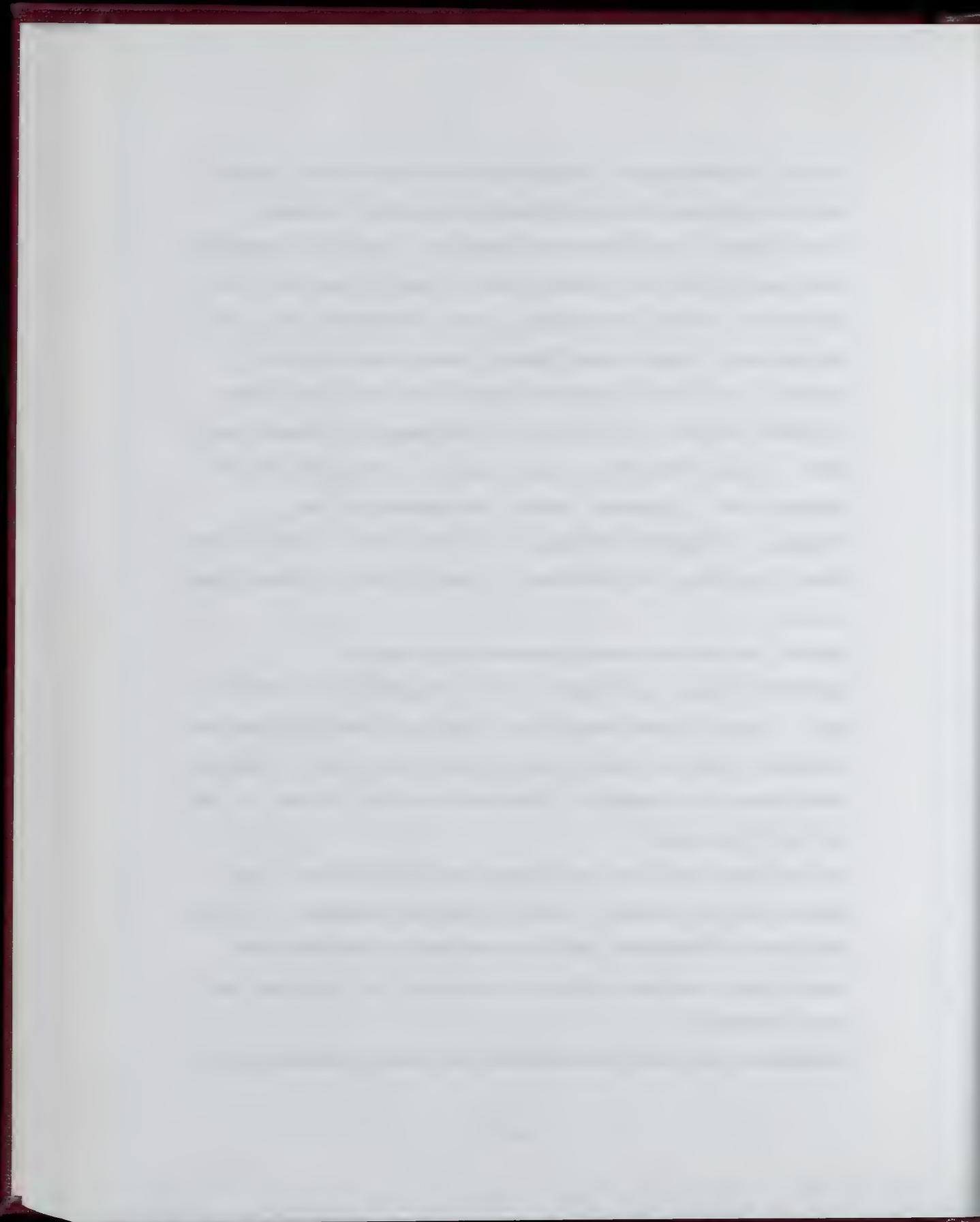
little boardinghouse. There was Wittkower and my cousin and his wife and another friend of my wife. It was a little group. And there was Wittkower. And this cousin of mine was a quite well known pianist, and he had his first concert in London. That was a great excitement among all the exiles. Funny, funny times, those first years in London. But there I met Rudi again, and we became great friends. We two, my wife and I, and Margot Wittkower and Rudi, we saw them constantly, really. I also met, mostly through him, I suppose, some of the people at the Warburg. [Leopold] Ettlinger and a few others. But I met them, also, say, at Wittkower's. But I had no professional contact.

SMITH: So you had really separated yourself?

HERRMANN: Yeah, art history I had finished with. And as I said, I don't think that I was-- Rudi may have told me--he certainly told me--about what he was doing. But I did not talk about art historical problems with him. Later on, but at that time, no.

SMITH: Were you involved in any way with efforts to get people out of Germany? Support work for refugees? In the thirties, in England, were you involved in any way with committees that were working to support, to help Jews and other people--?

HERRMANN: We were involved with one relief organization in



quite a different way because they got children out of Germany. We took two children, a boy [Peter Reiche] and a girl [Eva Putzel], and they are now sort of our step-children.

SMITH: So they lived with you?

HERRMANN: Two refugee children. These refugee children are now retired. [laughter] But they are both alive, and we have close contact with them still. They lived for some years, until war broke out, with us. That was a close connection with the relief organization. Otherwise-- You asked a different question. There were-- Yes. Then, of course, people came from Germany, friends came. Then I had to look for a job. And there came propositions, one after the other. One of the first was a literary agency. And I worked for a little while in this literary agency, which tried-- The man who ran it was a literary agent in England for some time, but not very well known, not very successful. But when this flux of exiles came, then he saw his chance. And many of them came through, very well known people. But he wasn't very good and not very influential. There were, of course, soon agencies-- Stefan Zweig or-- Well, all the names. And they drifted off to these successful agencies. I worked for him for a while. They came through. I met them, they disappeared again. But I was quite interested. And then I was-- Benn. Do you



know--?

SMITH: Gottfried Benn?

HERRMANN: Benn, yeah. I don't quite remember how it happened. He gave me a manuscript. And then I think he disappeared then.

SMITH: He stayed in Germany through the--

HERRMANN: He stayed in Germany?

SMITH: He was a doctor.

HERRMANN: And what happened to him?

SMITH: He survived. He died in Berlin in the fifties.

HERRMANN: Well, that is really-- I got his manuscript, and I don't quite remember why and how and-- But at these times, it was quite normal. You got something from somebody and that somebody disappeared. And so I may have left the manuscript, then, with the agency. I don't know. But other members, [Paul] Frischauer-- I worked there several months. But he was not successful. He couldn't hold really important people. And so nothing came of it. But there I had these contacts. And then personal people came. Friends came over. Sometimes I had to go to Dover to try to get them. They didn't let them off the boat.

SMITH: Oh.

HERRMANN: And then he gave my name and they phoned me, and I, in this particular instance, couldn't get them off the



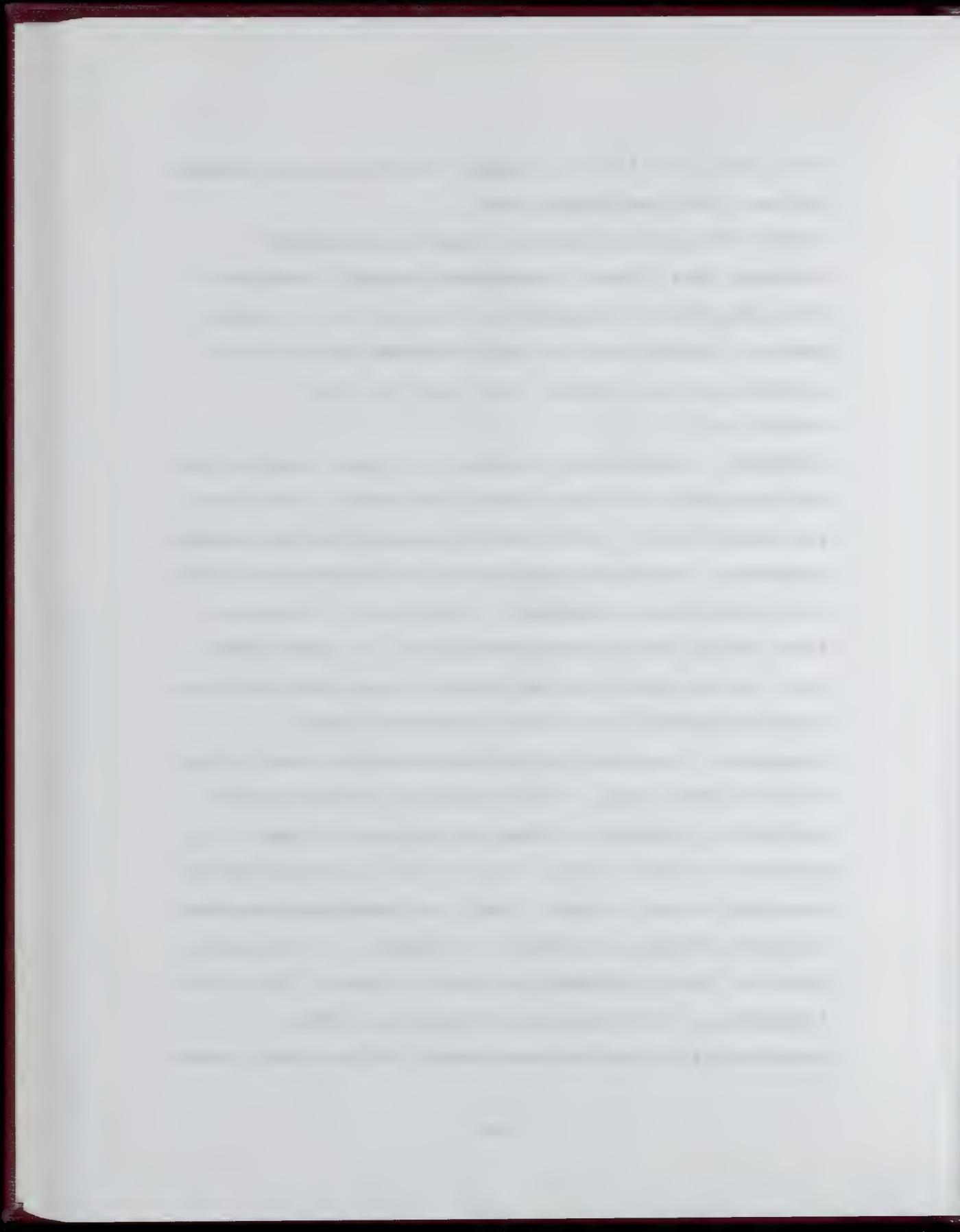
boat. They went back to France; I don't know what happened to them. So-- And others came.

SMITH: You said you became a zipper manufacturer?

HERRMANN: Well, then I tried other things. There was a young man who had immigrated to Paris and was a chemist, perhaps. And he came over and introduced me-- He had a prescription for a cream. Did I tell you that?

SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: A hand cream. You put it on your hands and you did dirty work. It didn't dirty your hands. Afterwards you washed it off. And he had the prescription and needed some money. He was willing to sell the prescription to me, and I would start a business. I did that. I started a firm, Scanol, and had the prescription. It needed this, that, and the other, and you needed a place where you could make the mixture. And I had a ramshackle place somewhere. I employed two girls--or one girl--who in big bins made that cream. I had these tins printed and had hundreds or thousands of them and they were filled. Sometimes it didn't work. Then the man from Paris had to come over to put it right. And I got some experience how to treat problems connected with chemistry. Quite useful later on. How to exclude any possible factor. It's quite interesting. And there were difficulties. Then I advertised a bit and had some orders. At one time I went--



Yes. My brother-- It's a long story. Now, I tell you all these long stories which have no relation.

SMITH: Well, perhaps some in England at the next session. But I am wondering, what did Anni think of your leaving art history? Your wife, Anni.

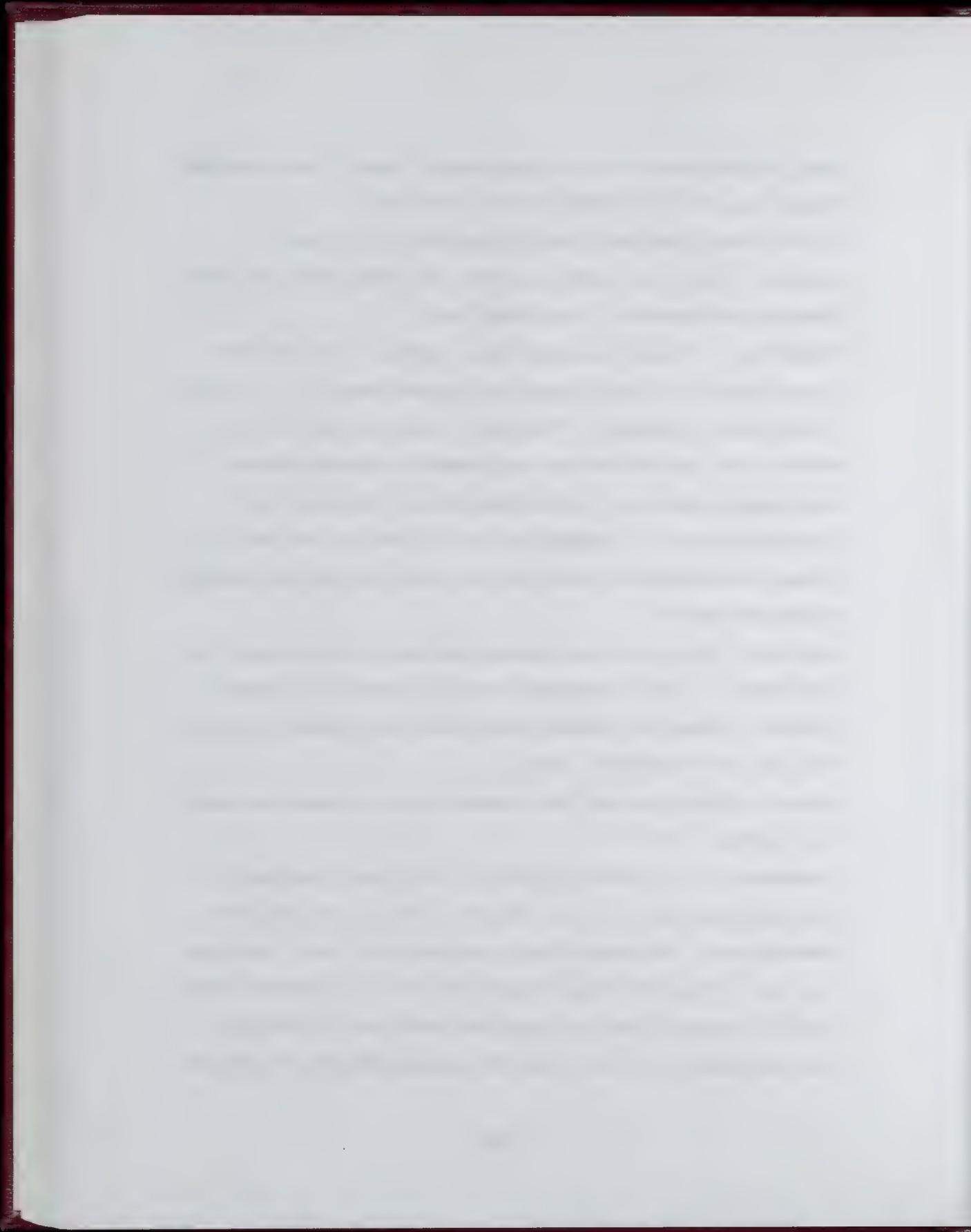
HERRMANN: I think she never knew, until I told her much later, that I-- I don't think we talked about it. I think I kept that to myself. That was a very private decision.

SMITH: Let me ask you one last question about Germany. Many people that you knew became Nazis. In your own thinking about it, looking back at it, do you see any common denominators? What do you think led certain people to become Nazis?

HERRMANN: Certainly some people became Nazis because they were Nazis. And I know some, also, in the art history [field]. Some had to keep their job, just joined the party but were not basically Nazis.

SMITH: If you had not been Jewish, do you think you could have become a Nazi?

HERRMANN: No. I don't think so. But I may also say, it was very easy for us. We, the Jews, for us it was much, much easier. You were a Jew, you had to go out. And that was that. The Christian people who went out because they couldn't stick it out or those who had, say, a Christian wife and went out, all those who stayed behind and did not



become Nazis--these mean much more. For us it was easy.

Yeah, it was no question. But there were quite a number of Christian people who came out with us.



TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

SMITH: When we left off last time, several months back, we had already discussed what you did--

HERRMANN: How far did we get?

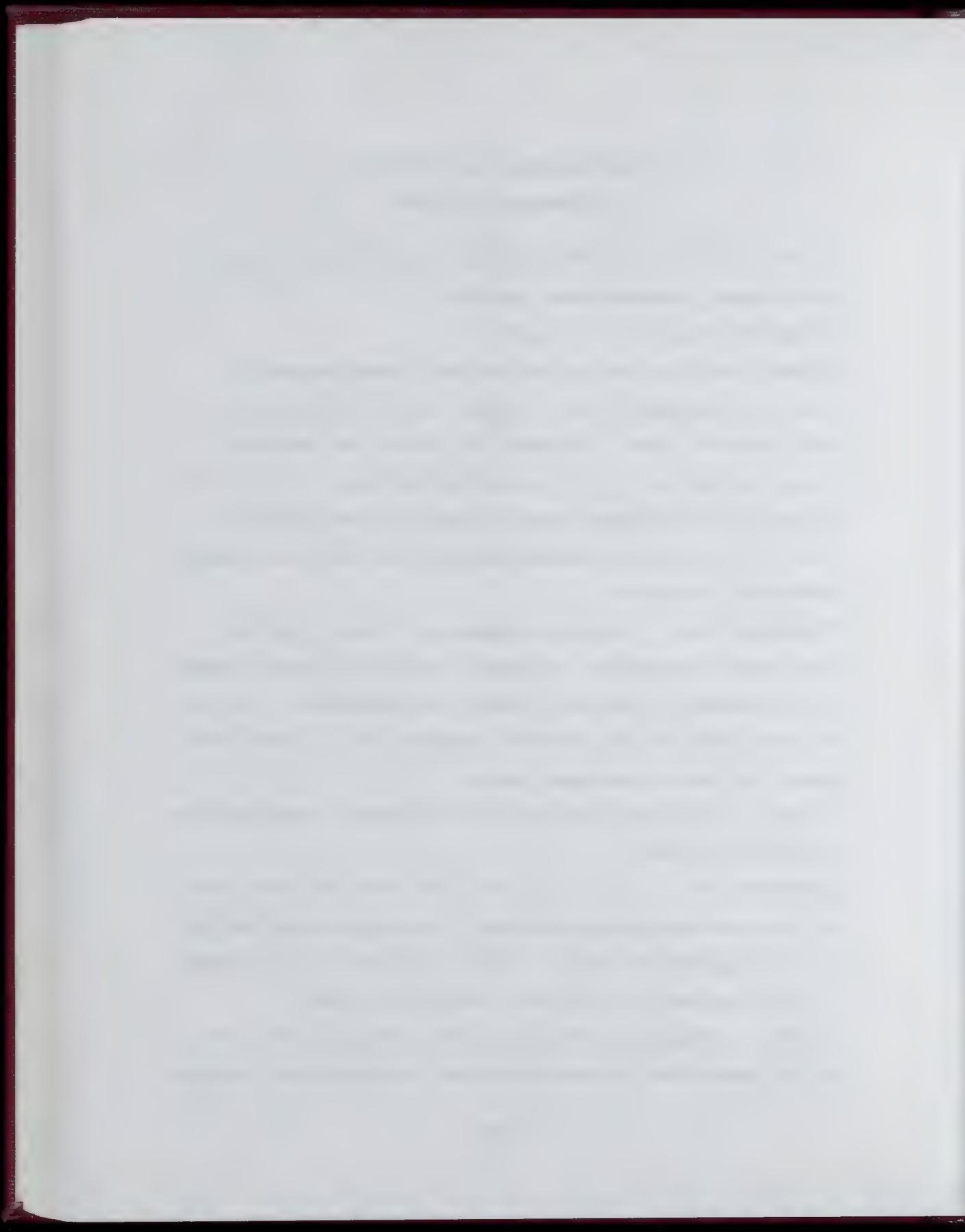
SMITH: We got as far as you and Anni [Marx Herrmann] coming to England in the thirties, and we discussed the work you did. What I thought I'd like to ask you this time, to start off with, is your perceptions of the state of British architecture and art theory in the 1930s and '40s. Not simply the German émigrés, but what was going on generally in England.

HERRMANN: Well, the main impression, I think, was that they were a generation, at least, behind the international or development in Germany, with a few exceptions. One was, at that time, the buildings in Highgate by-- I forgot the name. It was an apartment house.

SMITH: Did you know the work of [Alexander] Mackenzie, the Scottish architect?

HERRMANN: Yes. I knew it, yes. But what was being built at the time was quite surprising, in a style which was at least a generation behind. And of what went on in Germany in the twenties, of that there was very little.

SMITH: In England at the time, there seemed to be, and still seem to be, a focus on a kind of antiquarian national



perspective. The eighteenth-century and Regency periods were very popular at that time, Regency-era architecture. Did this in any way relate to your later interest in Laugier?

HERRMANN: No. No, it didn't. I think I mentioned that before-neoclassical architecture was in the twenties--at least I thought it was--good architecture, but not progressive, not helping the progressive architecture of that time. And so Regent Street, or the old part of Regent Street, and the parks and the squares, all that impressed me very much, but not as something which would lead forward.

SMITH: It sounds like you didn't feel that there were architects in England who were looking forward, particularly.

HERRMANN: No, no. It was a very great impression. I had been in London in '26, or whatever it was, but I didn't look for modern architecture. But only when we came over in '33, and there were buildings going up or just being completed in a style that in Germany had long been abandoned. Here, what was built in the thirties and forties, right up to the war, was surprisingly outdated. That was when we moved into our house in [Hampstead] Garden Suburb in 1934. It was a house being built, which was more or less finished, but we made a few alterations. Among



others, we installed central heating and had to sign our lease-- We had to sign it; when we moved out, we were to take the central heating out again. Well, that is about the impression I had of the modern spirit in London.

SMITH: That's curious that they wouldn't even see it as an improvement.

HERRMANN: In the end, we didn't have to take it out. That was, then, thirty years later.

SMITH: How far out of London were you living, then, in the the Garden Suburb? Where was that located?

HERRMANN: Exactly Kingsley Way. It's-- The original part of Hampstead Garden Suburb was built by, mainly, [Raymond] Unwin and-- I can't think of names, but Unwin designed it. That's interesting, interesting today, too. But when we came, that scheme was already diluted and was not-- The part where we lived had lost its character, was very pleasant and nearest to the way we lived in Berlin, was very similar. But the Hampstead Garden Suburb, I think, was built at the beginning of the century. And that was something progressive at the time.

SMITH: Was it easy for you to get into central London from there?

HERRMANN: Yes, by tube.

SMITH: Oh, you were on the tube. Where were you working at that time? You had gone into business.



HERRMANN: Then, when I started in that business, we-- I told you about all that. First in Stamford Hill, which is northeast of the city. And that-- No, I had a car. I reached [it] by car. Later on, when I worked in the zip-fastener business that was out on the high road, easy to reach on the outskirts.

SMITH: It sounds like, in many ways, you were distant from the cultural centers.

HERRMANN: Yes. I had to see clients right in the city of London, very close to Liverpool Station, which is right next to the city. And there were still small merchants and small people who made leather bags needing zip fasteners. That was a very interesting district, which was completely wiped out in the bombing in the war. It doesn't exist anymore. At the moment, the Barbican is there. But what was there were little streets, and much more interesting than what it is replaced by now.

SMITH: But as a modernist, you don't think the Barbican is very interesting?

SMITH: No, I don't like the Barbican very much, but not just because there aren't these old dilapidated districts with small businesses. It is something which still exists on the other side, in Smithsfield, the other side of the city. And right behind the Lloyd's, the modern Lloyd's building, is a very interesting market, still there, but,



of course, it will have to disappear. But something better than what they did after the blitz-- They planned to put a highway all through London. And they started on it, about a mile long, and then it stopped. And it's still there. Next to the Barbican is a proper highway which leads to nowhere and starts nowhere, but it was really without any further [inaudible].

SMITH: What was the status of William Morris as a thinker on art and architecture at that time? Were you aware of him?

HERRMANN: Yes, I was aware of him. But I think my interest in the arts and crafts movement came later, with [Gottfried] Semper.

SMITH: What about John Summerson? Was he a figure you were familiar with?

HERRMANN: I met him much later when I worked on Laugier.

SMITH: On Laugier?

HERRMANN: Yes. But at that time, I had no contact at all.

SMITH: Were you reading his work?

HERRMANN: No. I don't think--

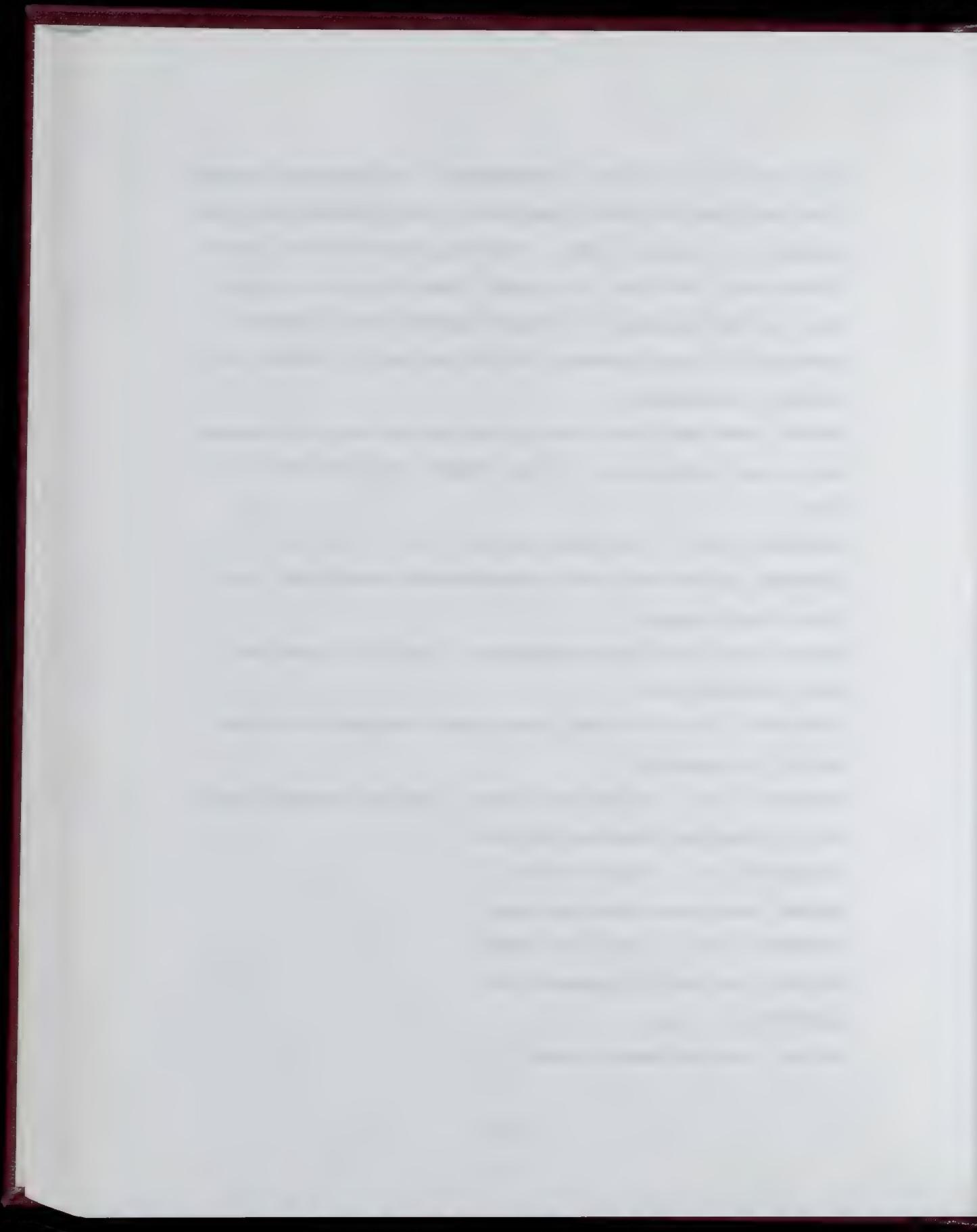
SMITH: What about John Betjeman?

HERRMANN: No. I knew him, but--

SMITH: You knew him personally?

HERRMANN: No, no.

SMITH: But you knew of him?



HERRMANN: What he wrote.

SMITH: Sacheverell Sitwell?

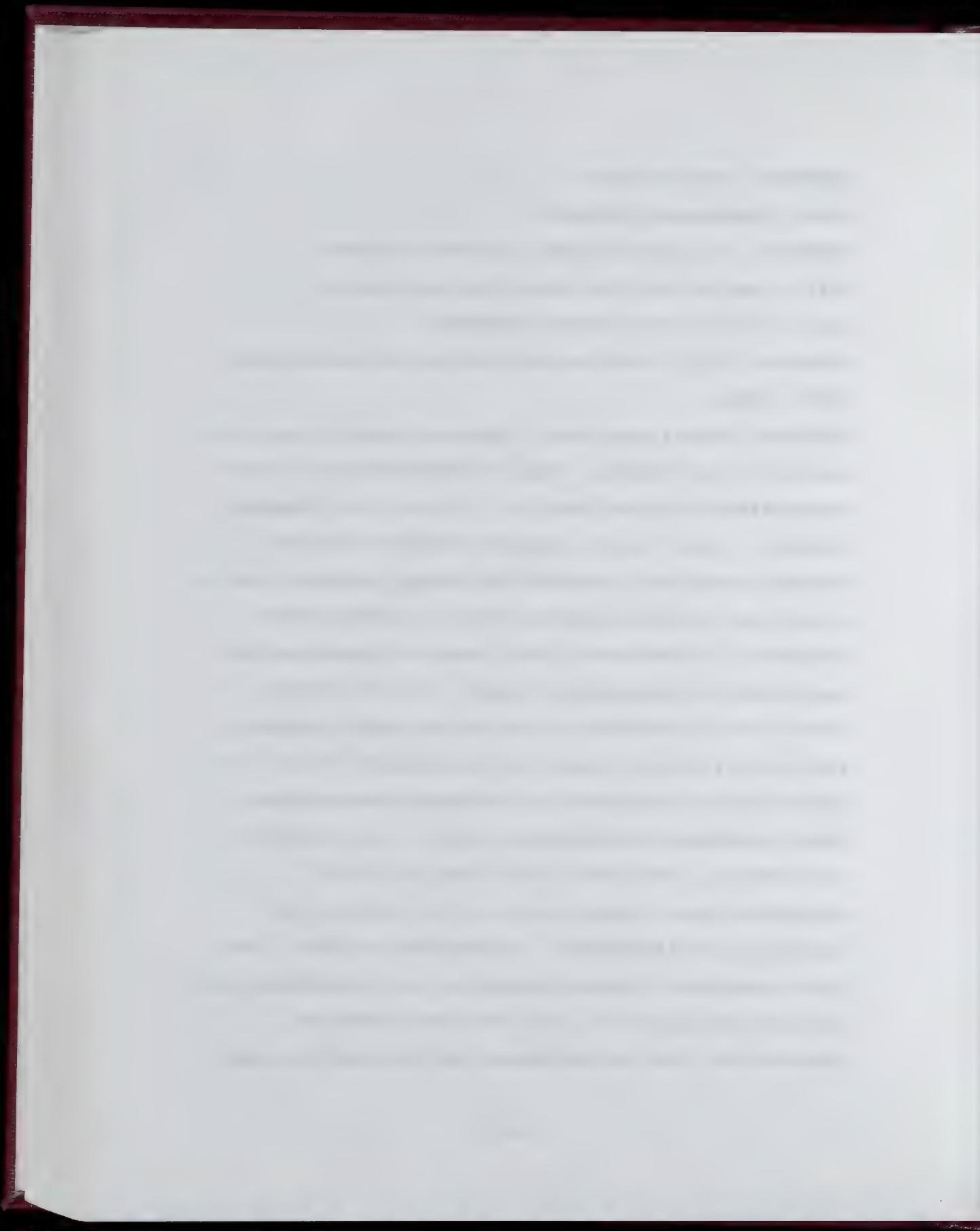
HERRMANN: No, not more than a general interest.

SMITH: How did you feel about their writings on architecture or architectural history?

HERRMANN: No, I think you are a bit on the wrong track.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: When I came over, I decided before I came over I wouldn't do art history. Now, the reasons were-- I don't know whether we talked about it. In part, for financial reasons. I felt that it would be difficult with art history to maintain a standard of living, although I was in a much more favorable position than my colleagues who emigrated. In addition--I don't know if I mentioned it--I was glad of the opportunity to get rid of art history. I didn't want to continue in a way in art history which I felt I had to do if I wanted to be successful there: the general way of attribution of aesthetic interpretation, purely aesthetic interpretation, which I was probably not very good at. And I felt, "If I stay on in the Kunstabibliothek, I have to work on this and may even rationalize it afterwards." But the fact was that I was quite happy not to do art history and to do something that was much more practical. So I may have looked at architecture, too, and buildings, and also may have been



interested in Morris, etc., but I did not take an interest in art history.

SMITH: Or what was being-- I mean, you would read what was being written in the newspapers.

HERRMANN: It was a new leaf, and I decided I will do some practical work. It took some time to find something, but then I concentrated on it. For many years, I concentrated on that, but because I was interested in politics, and also in art, but in a very general way.

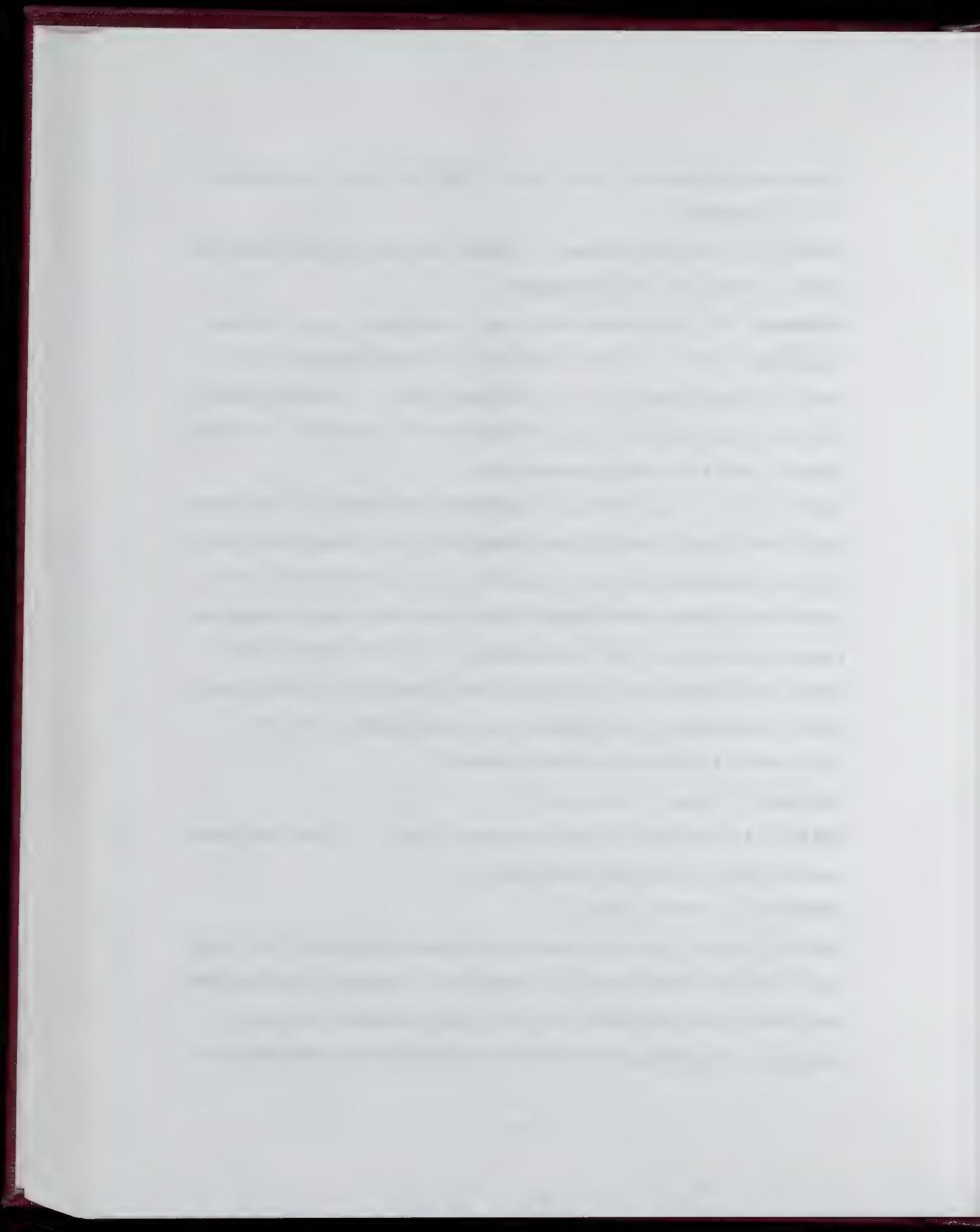
SMITH: In all the European countries and America, it seems that there was a very strong idea that the humanities were part of progress and civilization, and the events of the twentieth century challenged that idea that a well-educated person was also a civilized person. Did the rise of the Nazis have something to do with your deciding to turn away from scholarship? The sense that scholarship was not sufficient to maintain civilization?

HERRMANN: I don't think so.

SMITH: It was really very personal, then. A very personal evaluation of what you were good at?

HERRMANN: I don't know.

SMITH: Maybe I'm not phrasing the question well, but there was, and one could read it, and-- For instance, Aby Warburg has things that he wrote in the 1920s where he worried whether scholarship would be strong enough to overcome the



dark forces that were developing and a view of scholarship as being a force to protect civilization. Did you share that?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Let's talk a little about the reaction of the British to the German émigrés who came over. Did you feel like you were welcomed here? That you could move out and join British society?

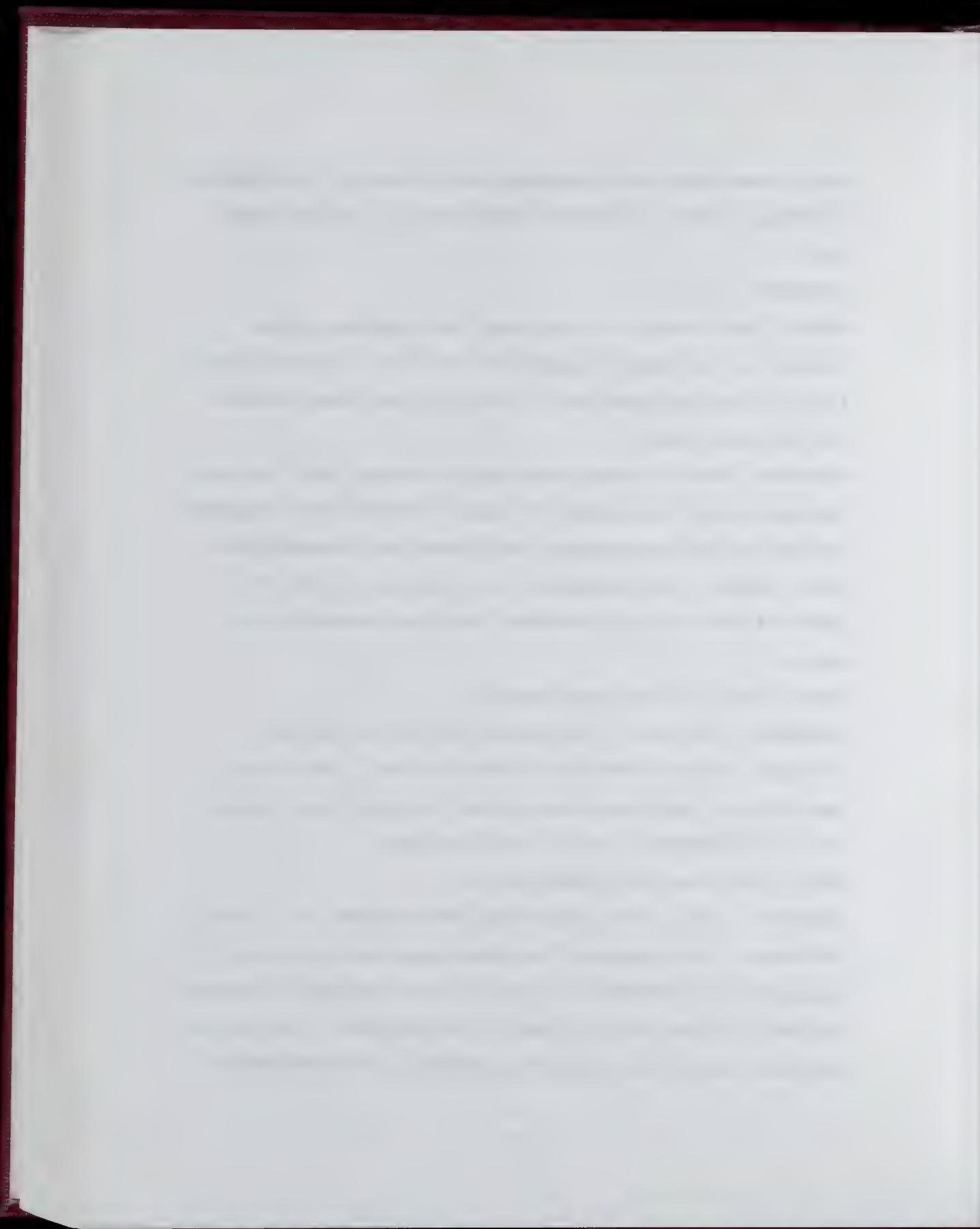
HERRMANN: Well, we mentioned here yesterday the-- We were welcomed by quite a number of people who knew what happened and what we had experienced, but these were comparatively small numbers. But generally, the impression was and remained that we were outsiders, and that basically is still--

SMITH: Still, after sixty years?

HERRMANN: Yes, yes. For myself, not for my children, although I doubt-- They don't feel British. They don't feel British, but they feel at home here and they are not-- They are accepted. They're fully accepted.

SMITH: But they don't feel British.

HERRMANN: But I don't think they feel British, no. They are aware-- For instance, the young grandson, who was a biologist, his friends are from all over the world, Indian friends, Chinese, any nationality but British. And that is personal, but it is not purely personal. It's something



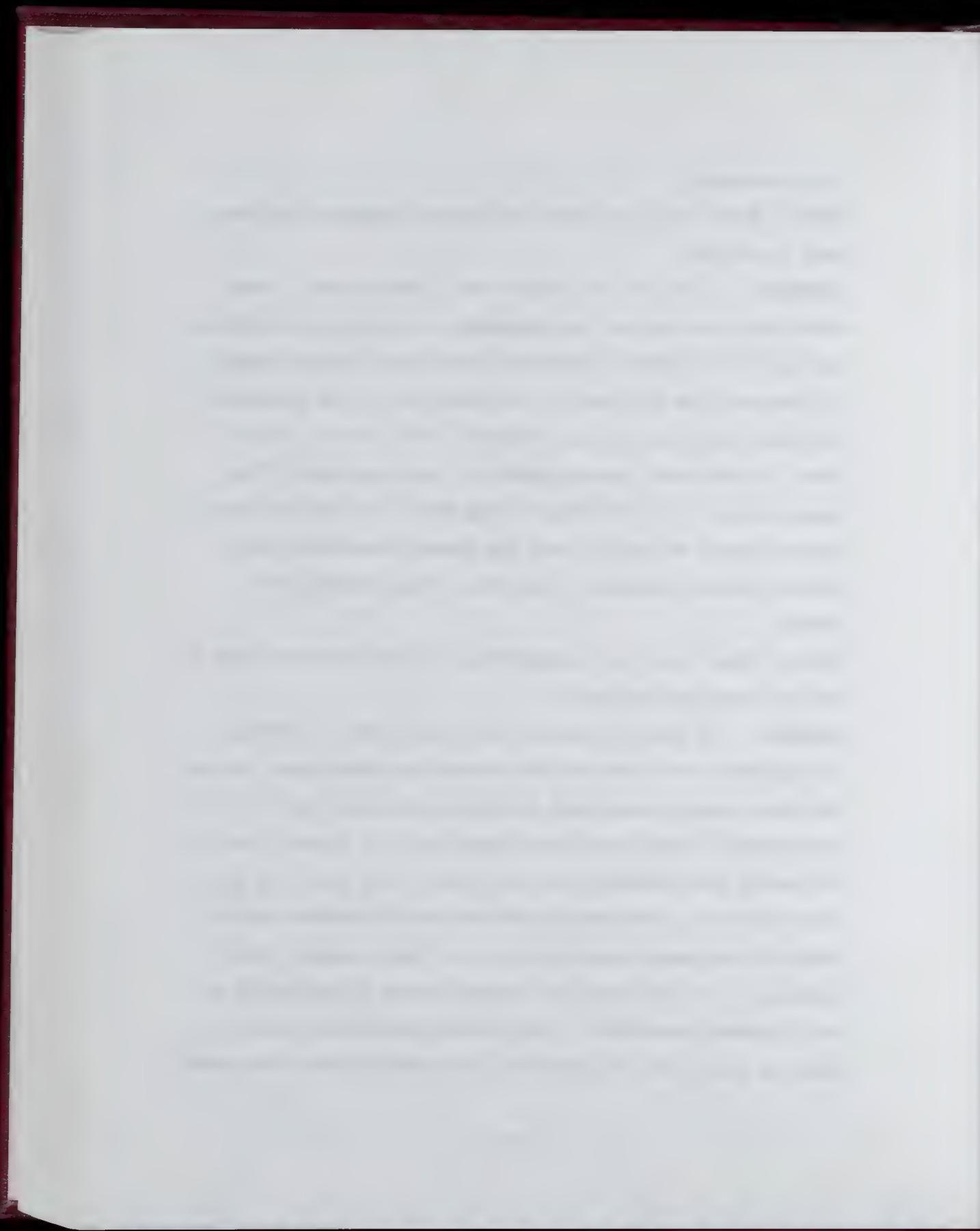
which remains.

SMITH: Does that mean that the Jewish identity has become more important?

HERRMANN: Of course, we have-- But I don't know. They were even complaining, the grandchildren, all the children, that we never really instructed them, never talked about it, because, as we grew up, the question of the religion-- not race, but the religion--didn't occur, didn't play a part. So we never talked about it, and they said, "You should have." The Jewishness they knew, but the religion that we had-- We didn't keep any Jewish festivals, any Jewish customs, nothing. And that, they figured, was wrong.

SMITH: What were your perceptions of anti-Semitism here in Britain when you arrived?

HERRMANN: It was, of course, much less than in Germany. but we knew there was certain normal anti-Semitism. But on the other hand, there were Jewish politicians, Jews in the government in high positions, which was, of course, new to us coming from Germany. So in a way, there was much less anti-Semitism. And some of our Christian friends had no idea of the Jewish question at all. They thought, for instance, that the Jews had stopped being in the world a few thousand years ago. That normal people were Jews-- When we came over, we found out that when we told them what



happened in Germany, they said, "Jews? I didn't know any Jews. I don't know that they were still alive." We said, "But this and this and that person, you were friends all the time; they were all Jews." They had no idea. That couldn't have happened in Germany. So in this way it was less anti-Semitic.

SMITH: In business, as you were operating in business, did you have business relations with Christians as well as Jews? British as well as émigrés?

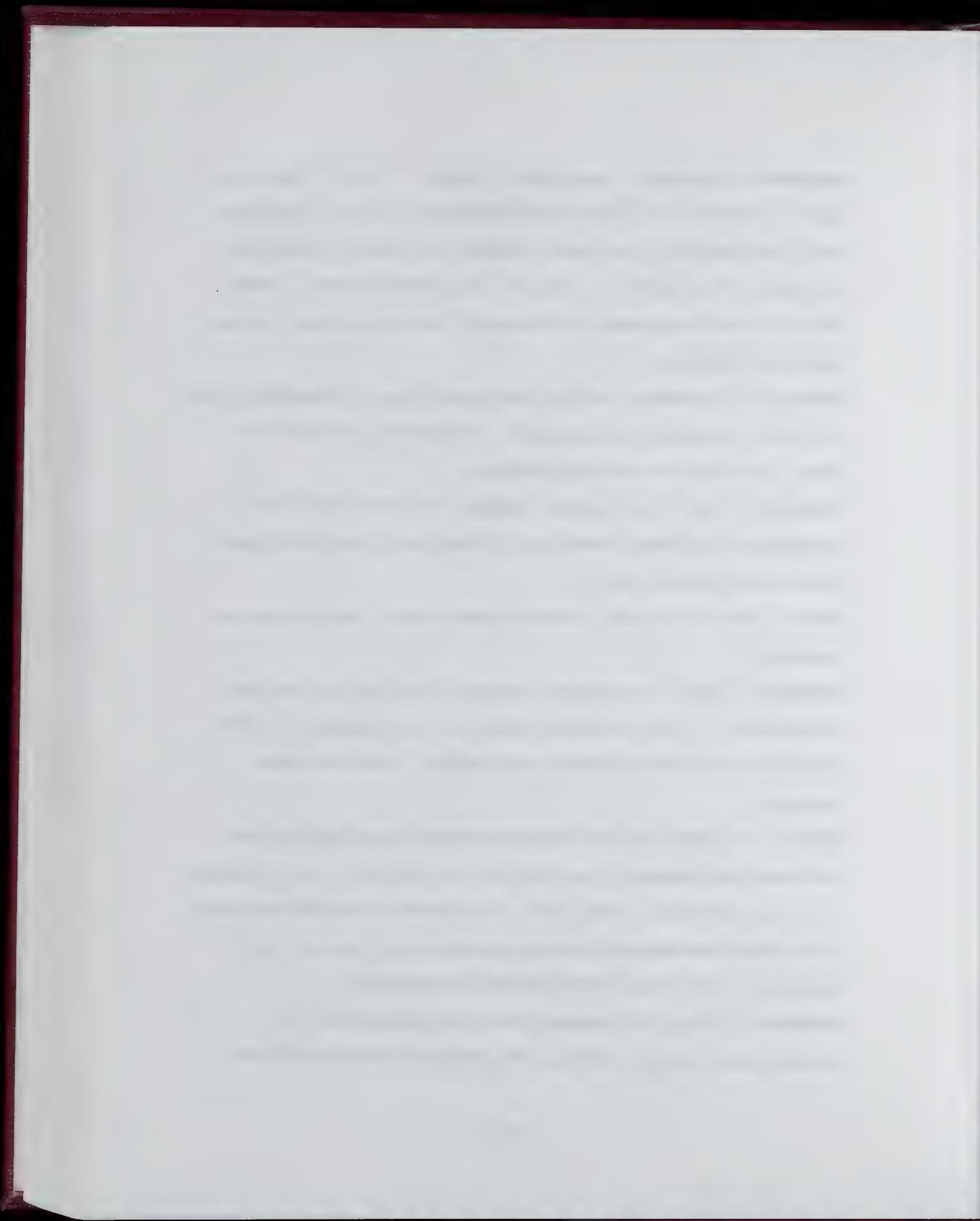
HERRMANN: Yes. To a great extent, the Jews were the customers, but there were also Christians, and there were no difficulties at all.

SMITH: Where did your funding come from? Your financial backing?

HERRMANN: Well, it became difficult during the war and afterwards. I had invested money in the business, and my father-in-law [Adolf Marx] also helped. But no other backing.

SMITH: In terms of the German émigrés entering British academic and museum life, you did not do that, but friends of yours did that. What were your perceptions of the ease with which the German émigrés entered into the British academic life? Say, Rudi [Rudolf] Wittkower?

HERRMANN: They did succeed, not only Wittkower, but others, too, mainly through the Warburg [Institute] and



Courtauld [Institute]. But it was, for many of them, a very hard time, financially, to manage. But professionally, they were quite successful, most of them. And they were accepted and published.

SMITH: Did you have any interaction with the Courtauld?

HERRMANN: Not at the time when I was out of art history. I think I only had connections again when I went back to art history, except Wittkower. Only when I started again. Then I met a few people I knew.

SMITH: Did you know Tom Boase? He was the head of the Courtauld in the thirties.

HERRMANN: No, I didn't know him.

SMITH: What about Edgar Wind?

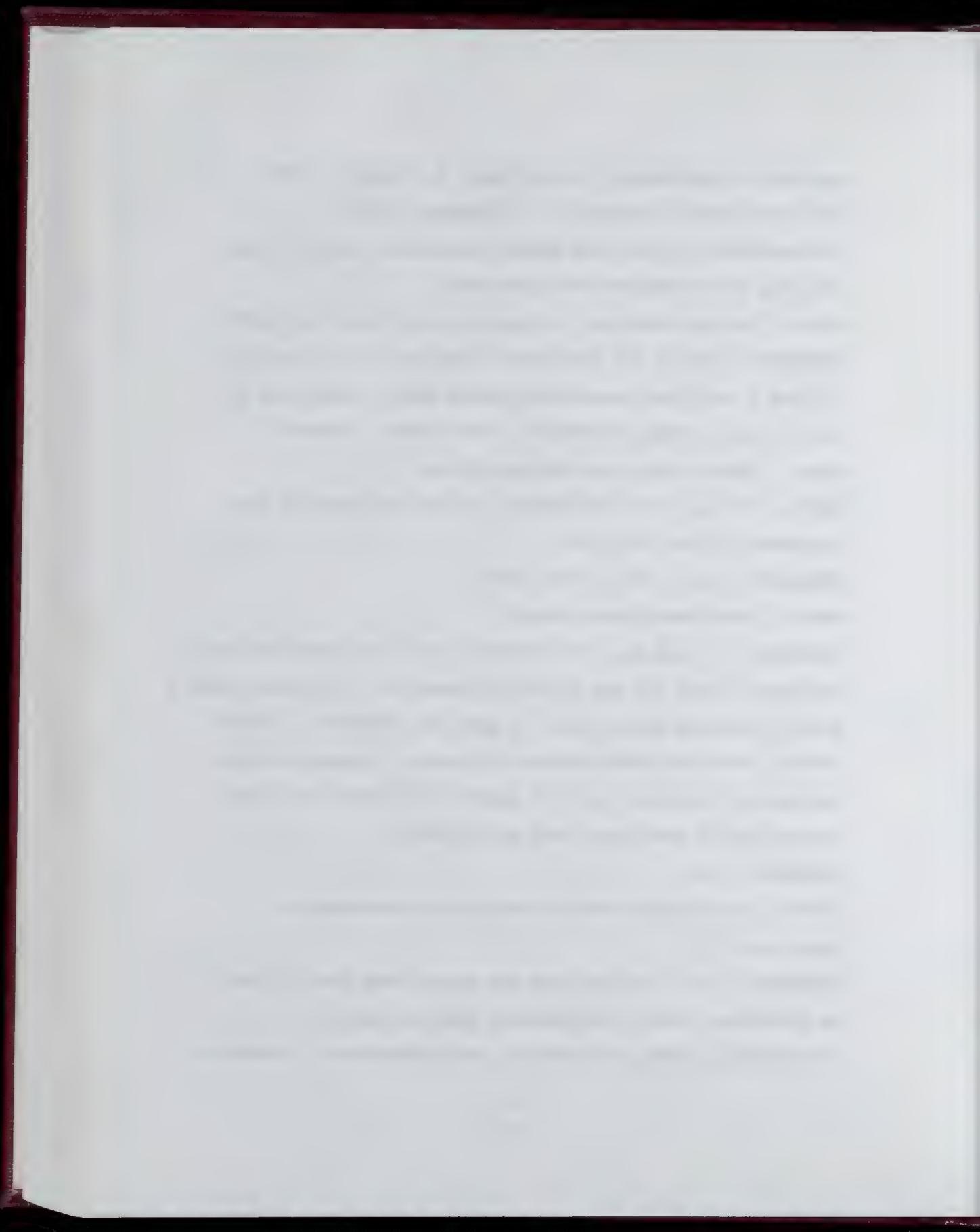
HERRMANN: I knew him from Germany, and I may have met him, but where I met him may be at Wittkower's. Yes, Edgar Wind I knew in Germany quite well. I also met him here, I think.

SMITH: Were you ever invited--? I mean, I know you were leaving art history, but did people like Edgar Wind ever invite you to come back into art history?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Encouraging you to think about an academic position?

HERRMANN: No. The only one who could have done it would be Wittkower, who-- And probably when we were at Wittkower's, there were people, art historians. I have no



recollection. But nobody asked me to come back. Maybe they suggested it, but I don't remember.

SMITH: Well, let's talk about your experiences during the war. You continued to be in business during the Second World War?

HERRMAN: Yes. We had before-- You should ask Anni [Marx Herrmann]. She's much better. Do you want to ask her? Or do you want to ask me? I think when war threatened, we thought we wouldn't stay in England. We wanted to go on and go to Mexico. But then the war came and nothing came of it.

SMITH: At that time, it was difficult to leave.

HERRMANN: My memory is-- Anni's would be much clearer about it.

SMITH: So you were considering leaving Europe altogether?

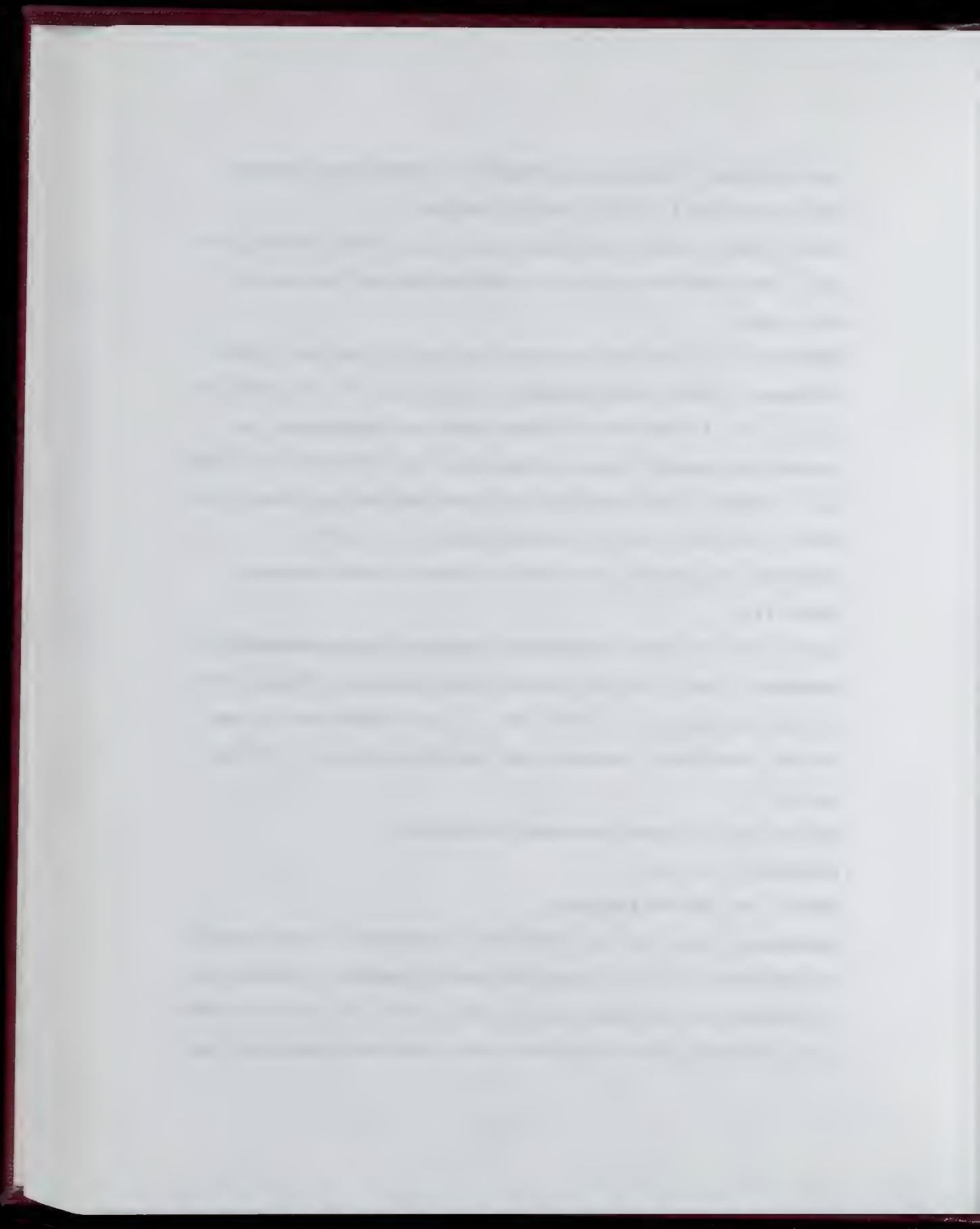
HERRMANN: Yes. At the time we were thinking-- Mexico was a place we could get a visa for. I don't know why it was Mexico from here. Anyhow, that we discussed, but nothing came of it.

SMITH: Did you ever consider Palestine?

HERRMANN: No, no.

SMITH: So during the war--

HERRMANN: Then the war came and we decided to stay, and we stayed here first in Hampstead Garden Suburbs. Before the blitz started, we moved out to Ware, which is a little town near Hertford, just-- At that time I worked already at the



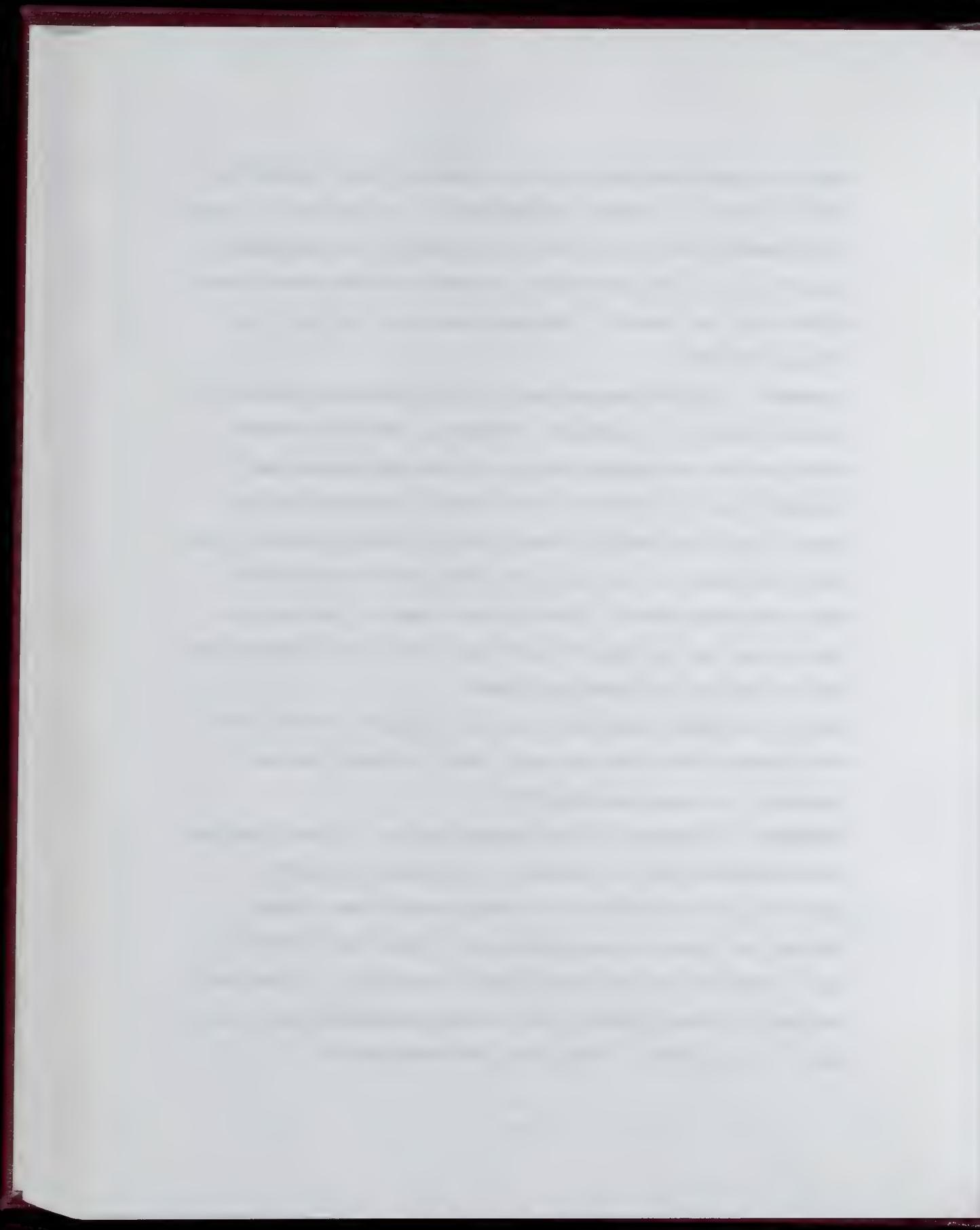
zip-fast, and there was a line, a railway line, going from there to Ware, in twenty minutes or so. So we went to Ware and stayed in Ware for a couple of years or so and moved to another place. The children-- I haven't talked about them?

SMITH: No, not really. You mentioned that you had two refugee children.

HERRMANN: Our children we took to a progressive school, a private school in the south, in Surrey, south of London, where we knew the people who run it and who became our friends. And the children were there. We moved out of London, but from time to time we had to come to London. We kept the house up. We had to do fire watch from time to time and stayed there. The children came on holidays to that place, and we stayed there until '44, '45. Before the end of the war, we moved back home.

SMITH: Was there any point that you thought it was likely that Germany would win the war? Say, in 1940, did you consider it a good possibility?

HERRMANN: Of course, in the beginning, yes. There was the invasion scare and, of course, the European dangerous position and-- We didn't, but many people, many Jewish people, got hold of some poison with which they lived in case. That was at the worst time. Then-- No, I think on the whole, after a while, they thought approximately like now: it will take a long time, but eventually--

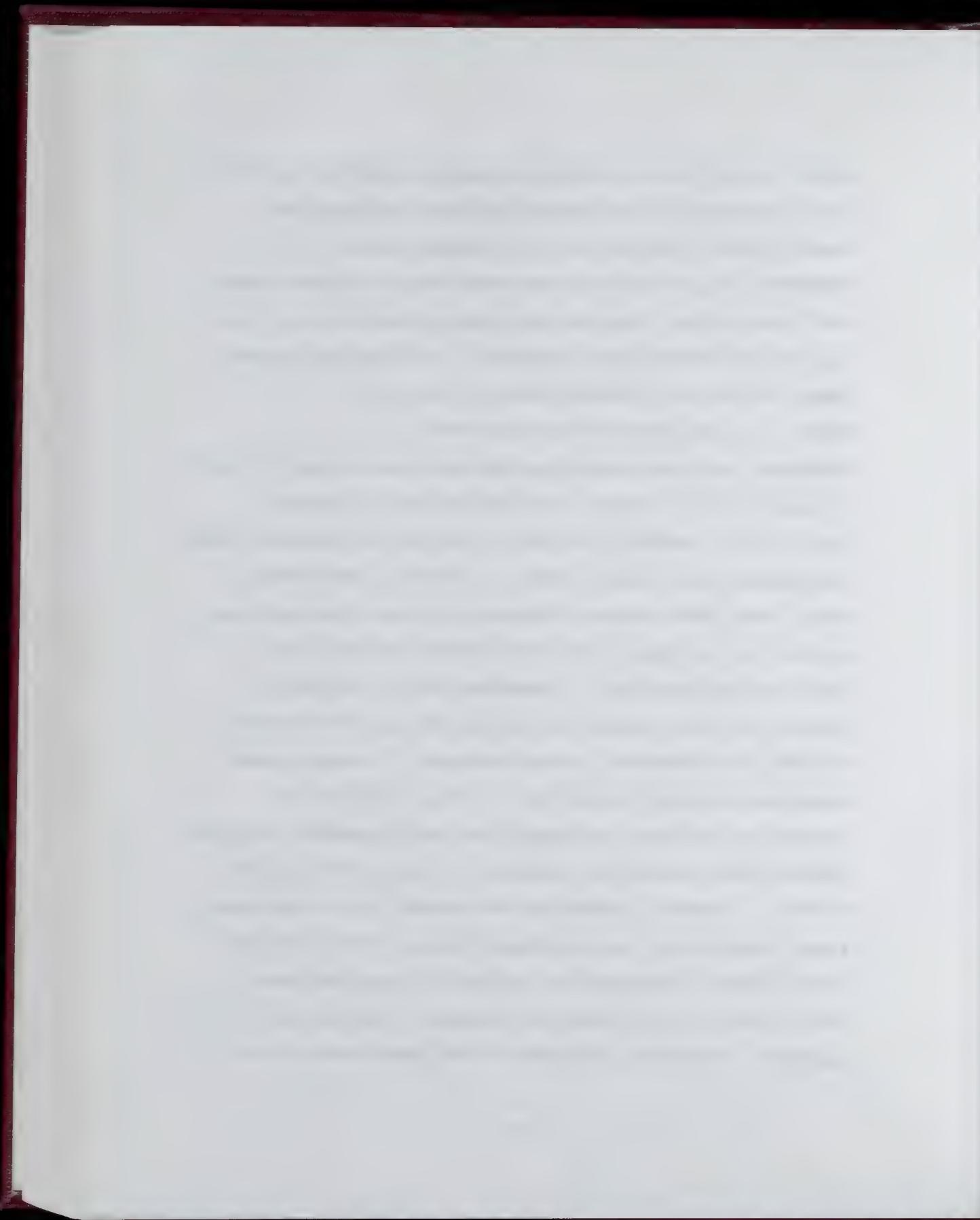


SMITH: Let's talk a little bit about postwar Britain and your situation. At the end of the war, what was the economy like? And how was your business going?

HERRMANN: I probably told you that we got through-- Anni and I were alone. The children were somewhere else. And many of our friends were evacuated. And then we started being interested in Greek history. Did I--?

SMITH: No, you haven't mentioned that.

HERRMANN: Oh, that was after the war started, yes. I felt I wanted to do something else, and we were in Greece. That's how it started. We made a journey to Greece in 1938 and stayed there several weeks, in Athens. And coming back, then, after the war started-- It was a blackout--you couldn't do anything. You were sitting at home. You wanted to do something. I remember when we arrived in Britain, we also thought we had the evening to ourselves. We read, for instance, Dickens together. I read Dickens aloud and my wife listened to it. Now, when the war started, we had been in Greece, and that prepared a bit for Greece, that interest in history. We started to go into history. I didn't go back to art history, but I went back in my free time to take up Greek history--that's all the Greek history--methodically, in more or less the same method that I use to study art history. And we did it together. Gradually, we read all the great historians:



Herodotus, Xenophon, in translation. But at the same time, I had never had Greek in school, so I took lessons in ancient Greek. And I got as far that I could read Aeschylus in Greek and enjoy it. And that went for many years. So gradually our library increased, and this part is mostly Greek, this down here.

SMITH: Was it political history? Or the art?

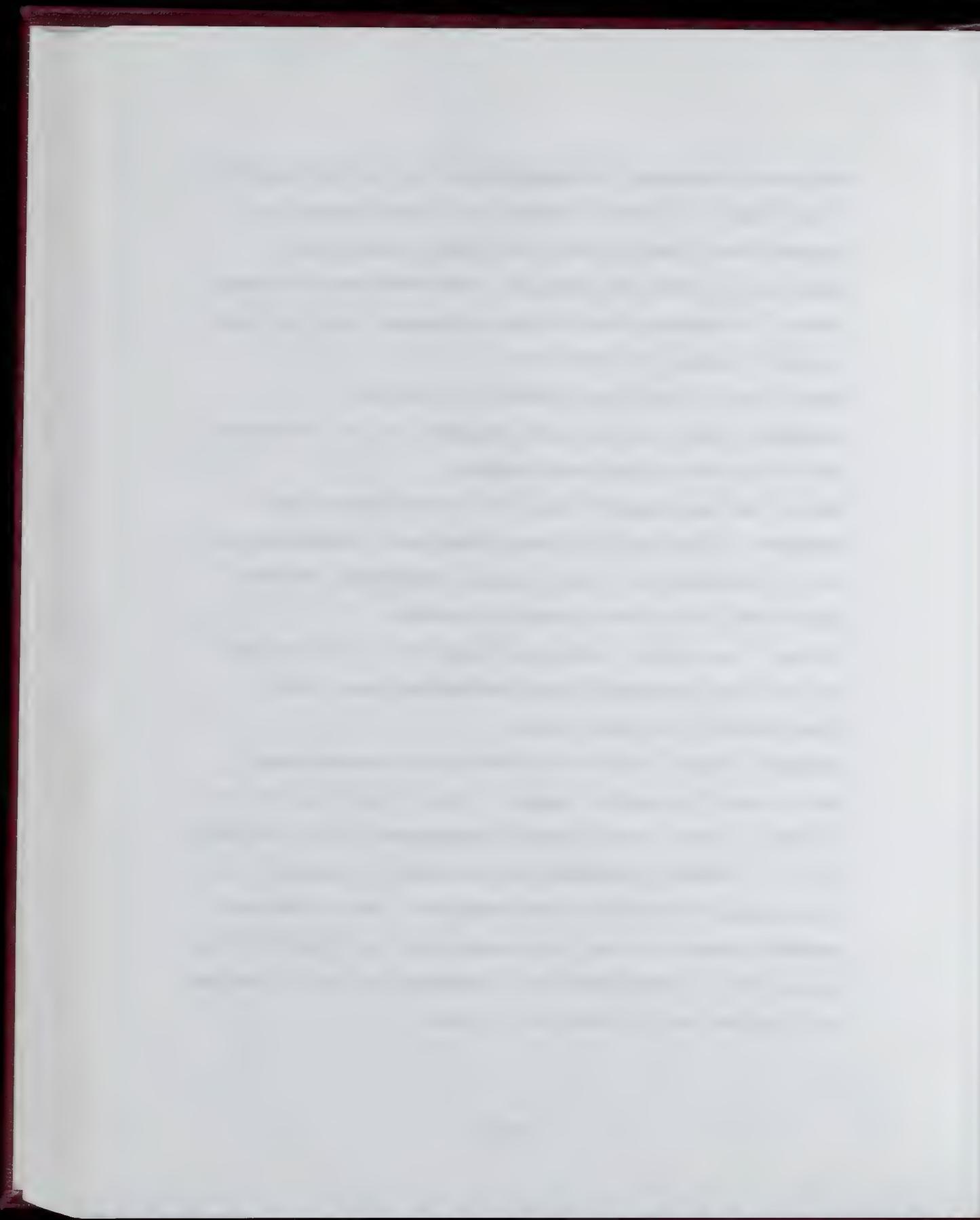
HERRMANN: Well, art of course entered into it, certainly, but it was mainly political history.

SMITH: And philosophy? Were you reading Plato and--?

HERRMANN: Plato too, philosophy too, yes. Aristotle and so on. But history I could manage; philosophy was more difficult. But to some extent Aristotle.

SMITH: I was going to ask you later, but I will ask you now what your attitude toward Winckelmann was. His interpretation of Greek culture.

HERRMANN: Well, I must have come to Winckelmann much later, when I worked on Laugier. When I came back to art history, I think then I came to Winckelmann. But, at that point, I worked on somebody who overcame Winckelmann, past Winckelmann's attitude toward Greek art. So I read him probably with that view, but recognizing his--just the same value. But he interested me as somebody who was at the end of a period, and I worked on the next.



TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

SMITH: What was the particular appeal of Greek history to you? What was it about the Greeks that attracted you?

HERRMANN: Probably and mainly the Athenian, the Attican. Somebody-- [George] Grote. And he is accepted. The attitude, the greatness of Greek in Attica. But then, also in this time, was the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire-- I forget the name--and that we studied.

SMITH: You mean Gibbon?

HERRMANN: Gibbon. So that was not Greek anymore.

SMITH: But Byzantine.

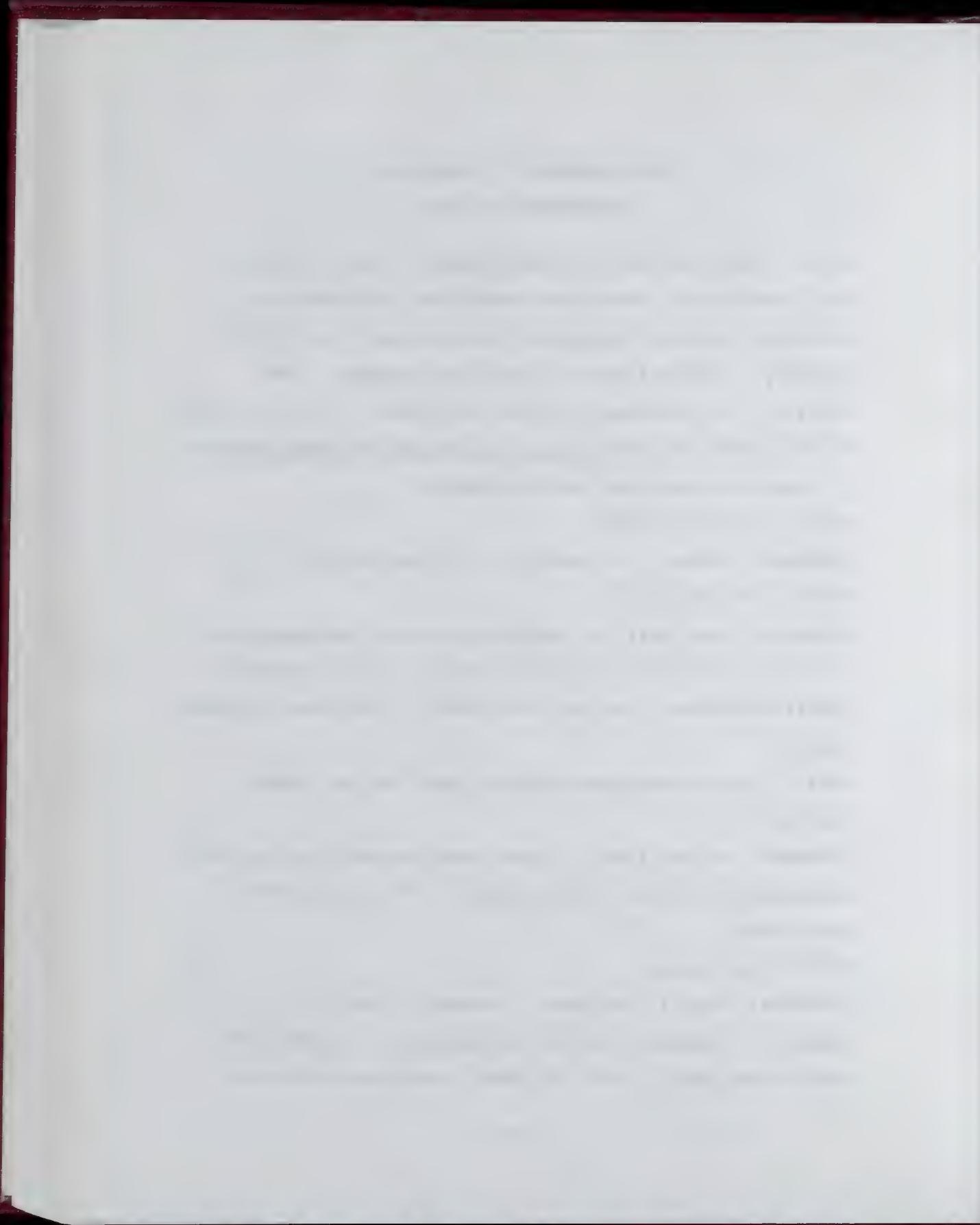
HERRMANN: Yes, well, it really starts with the beginning of Rome and ends with the end of Rome. It's a fantastic, unbelievable book. So that also falls in the time of Greek studies.

SMITH: So how many years did you spend on your Greek studies?

HERRMANN: A long time. It must have started right at the beginning of the war, and it ended in '50 or so. That would mean--

SMITH: Ten years.

HERRMANN: That is ten years. Somehow I feel it's longer. It probably did not end abruptly. It must have been around about '50 or '51 when I went out of the zip-



fast business and decided to go back to art history. When I resigned, it was a sign of ending one profession and starting something else. We wanted to make a break and went to Greece and stayed in Greece and Athens for three months or so. And there I was interested in the man Hansen who built neoclassical in the beginning of the nineteenth century. That, I thought, was a man I could work on.

SMITH: What was his name again?

HERRMANN: Theophil Hansen. He built an observatory in Athens and built some academic institute and later, much later, at the end of his life in Vienna, he built the academy, I think. I thought that that was a man I could somehow work on. Then, later on, Laugier came into the picture. But at that time in Athens, I was vaguely thinking that I wanted to do art history again, but I didn't know how to do it, how to start.

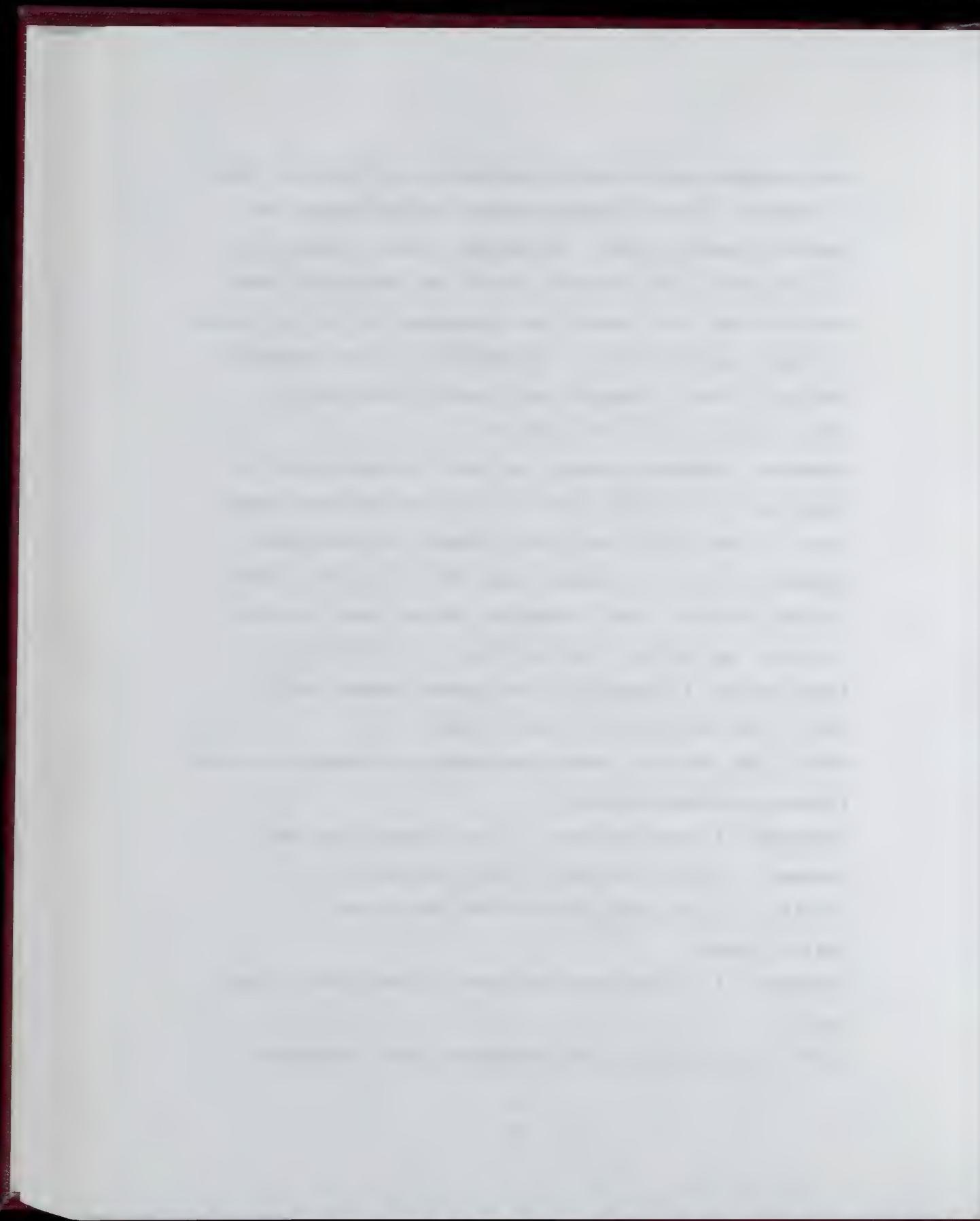
SMITH: Was the turn toward neoclassicism connected to your interest in Greek history?

HERRMANN: It may have been. I don't quite know why, because, on the other hand, I said neoclassical architecture originally didn't mean much to me.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: It may be that that was-- I really don't know why.

SMITH: But here you have a movement which is based on



going back to-- Granted, these are their own perceptions, and they're twisted, but the idea that they are resurrecting Greek aesthetics as opposed to Roman aesthetics.

HERRMANN: No, no. It happened quite differently. That is why this observatory and the man interested me--I think possibly because I couldn't find anything about him in the guidebooks. And I thought, "This observatory is a curious building." But when I came back from Greece and then tried to go back to art history, I forgot about him. Then I came to Laugier quite differently.

SMITH: Before we go on to Laugier, I actually want to go back to your decision to leave the zip-fastener business. Was the business doing well at the time?

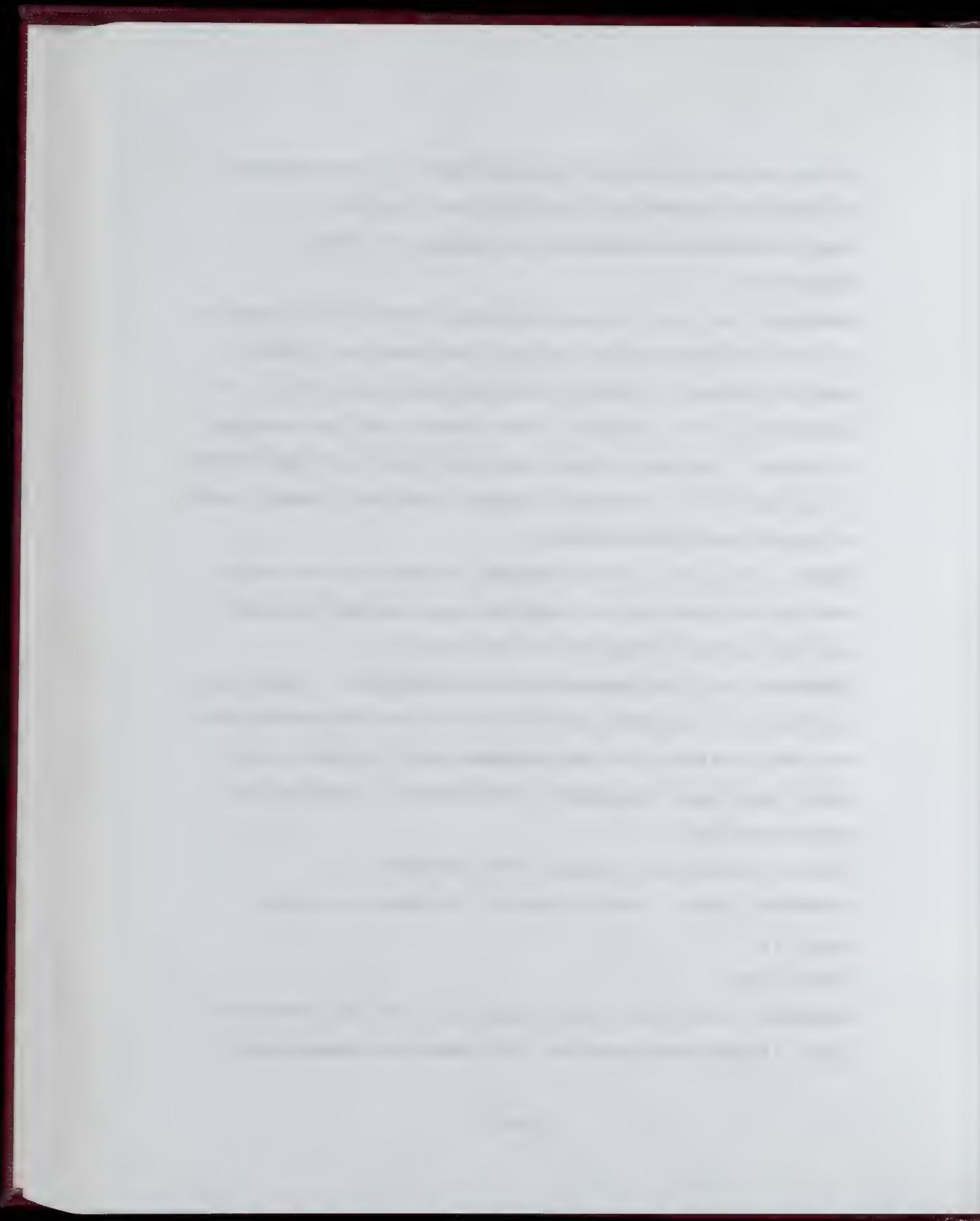
HERRMANN: No, the business was not doing well. There were difficulties, personal difficulties with my brother-in-law, who was a partner, and the business didn't do very well. Well, then I got the pension from Germany. That was the decisive thing.

SMITH: So you got a pension from Germany?

HERRMANN: Yeah. I still get it. I thought we talked about it.

SMITH: No.

HERRMANN: No. Then, quite generally, and soon after the war-- It must have been '46, '47, when the German state

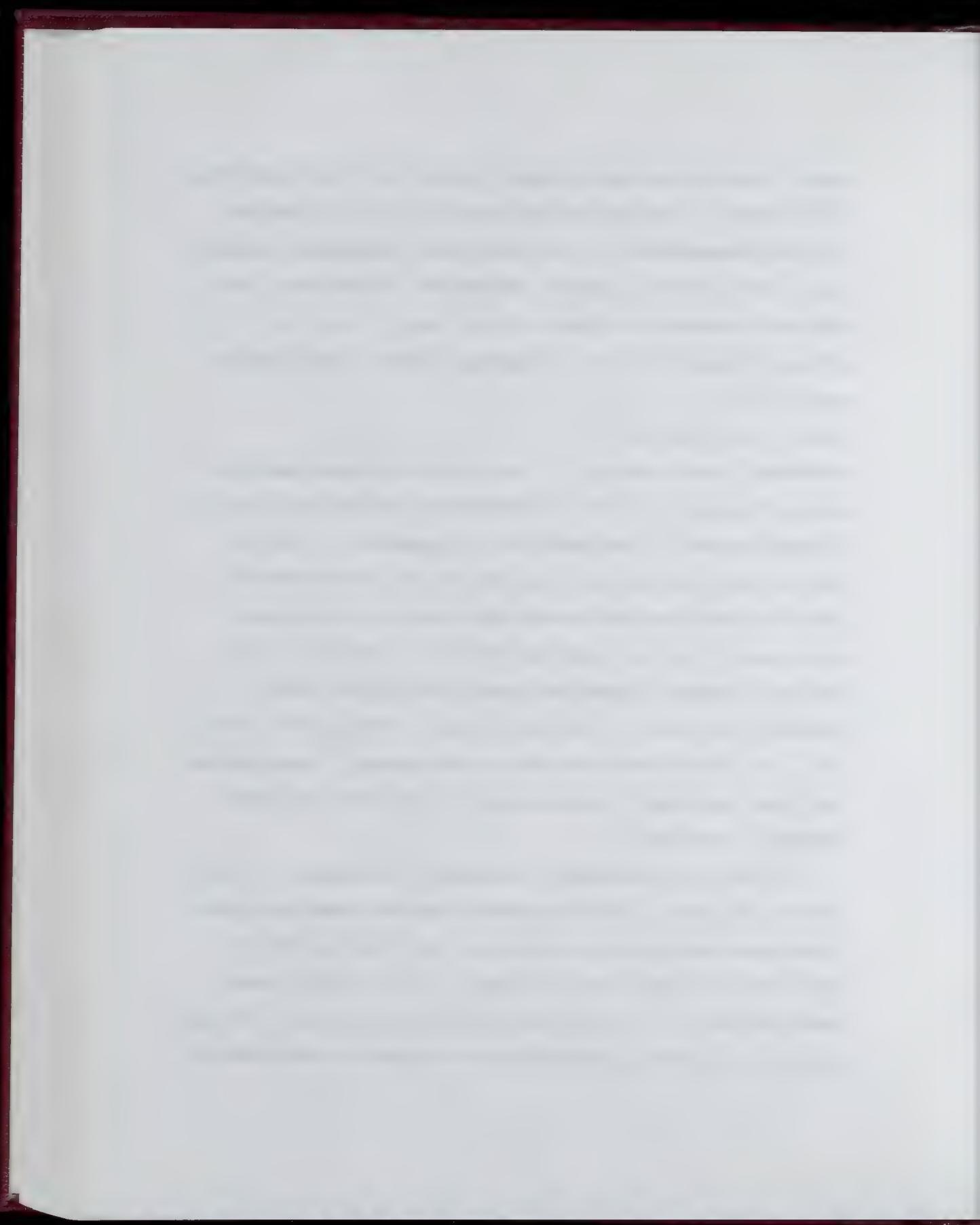


was-- I don't know when it was. Maybe '48. They said they would make restitution to the Jewish victims of fascism. And that became known. Then there were immediately lawyers here, mostly German lawyers, who helped in that way, and I got onto somebody who dealt with my case. I was an official German employee, a Beamter. What is the English word for it?

SMITH: Civil servant?

HERRMANN: Civil servant. I was a civil servant employed by the Prussian ministry of whatever it was called. So as a civil servant, I was entitled to a pension. I had to make an application, and also the lawyer, and eventually I got it signed that they would pay a pension, which was quite good. And that made me decide. In addition, with the zip fastener, there were many difficulties, and I wanted to get out. My brother-in-law was happy if I went out. And so-- I had invested in the company. They paid me out, and, moreover, I got a pension. And that was when I decided I would do it.

To end this restitution business-- Eventually, it was after a few years, it became known that you were entitled-- I was pensioned off as a curator at the lower grade, but then they said that that is unfair. If I wouldn't have been chucked out, I would be, by now, this or that. So you could make another application that "By now I would be the



director of the Kunstabibliothek. I was on that scale." And I had to have some people who should state that this was much more likely. So I had to get in touch with people I knew in Germany. One or two gave that affidavit, and so eventually I was pensioned off as the director, at the rate of a director. And that pension, I still get. And whenever--and it is every year--in Germany the civil servants' rate is increased, taking the inflation into account--I get an increase every year. So that is my position.

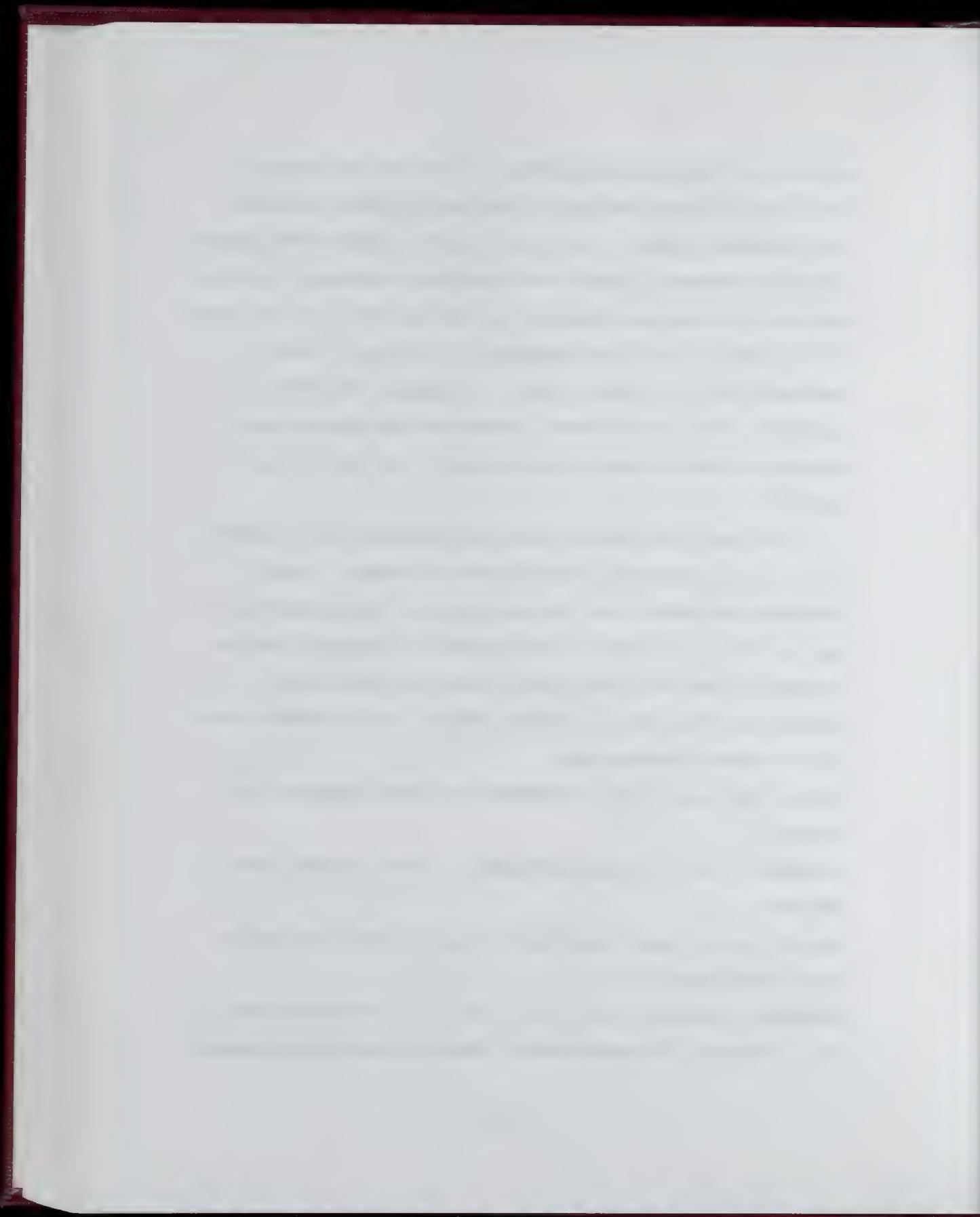
This was the reason I left zip fasteners and decided I'd start on something, and we went to Greece. Then I prepared very much also the art, outside the archaeological part of it, and I went, while we were in Athens, into the archaeological institute, the British archaeological institute. They have a library there. And I worked there just on Greek archaeology.

SMITH: But you haven't published on Greek classical art history.

HERRMANN: No, not that seriously. I only worked as an amateur.

SMITH: But it would have been a logical next step to go from Greek history to--

HERRMANN: Exactly, but I don't think I considered that. But I liked it, to work there. Then I also met by chance a

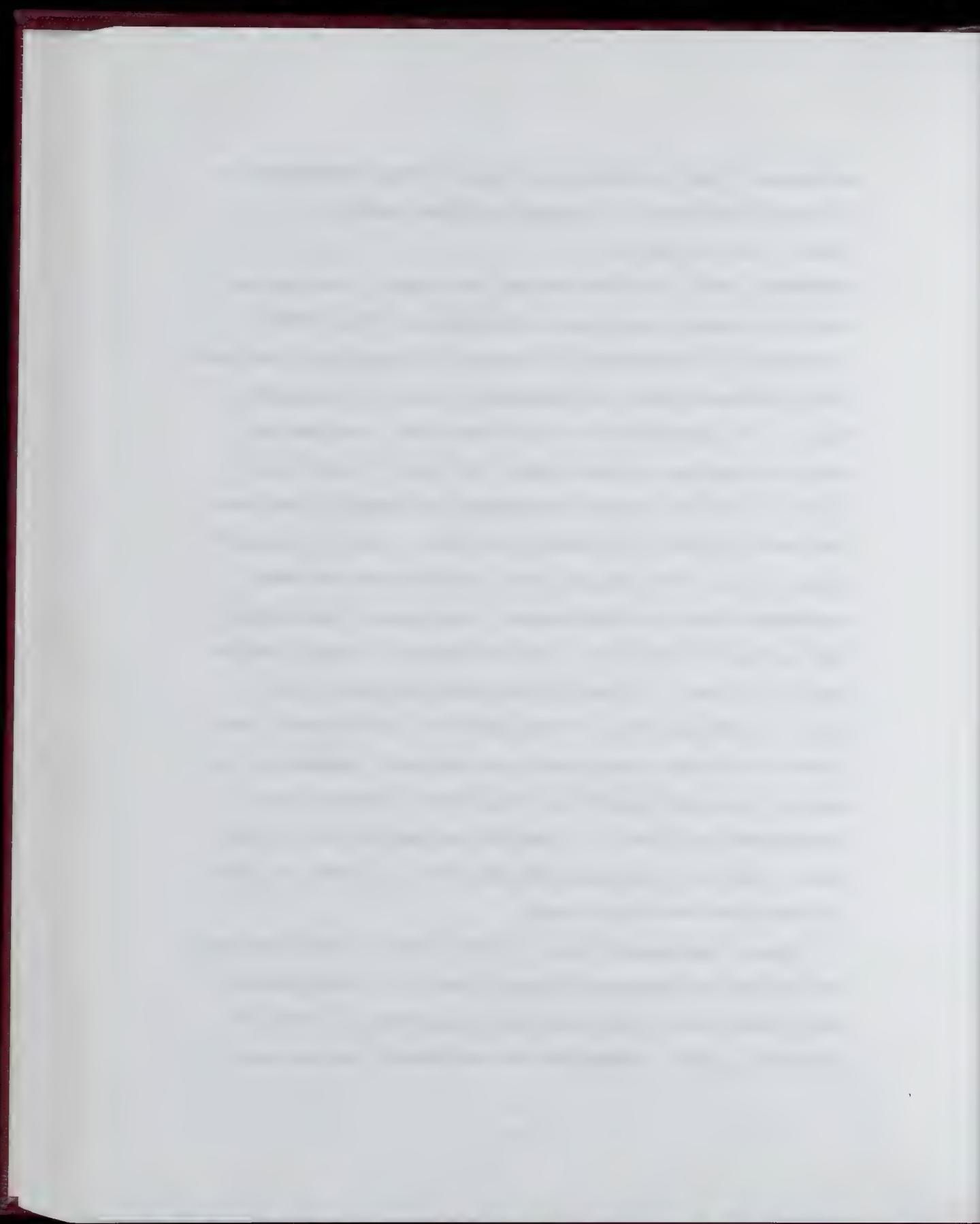


colleague I had in Leipzig, who was by then excavating in Olympia. And when-- I thought we talked about it.

SMITH: No, not at all.

HERRMANN: Well, we traveled on, Anni and I, and when we were in Olympia, there was an excavation. The Germans excavated the hippodrome in Olympia in connection--that was before the war--with the Olympiade, Hitler's Olympiade in Berlin. He wanted to have that excavated. So that is really going back to that time. But now I finish that story. I saw the people excavating, and one of them, seen from afar, I said, "I think I know him. That is Krause." Krause I knew from Leipzig, but I didn't want to have anything to do with the Germans. Anni said, "Excavating. You must go and see him." So reluctantly, I went, and he said, "Oh, yes." It wasn't that long ago that I had left. I left in '33, and that was five years later. He turned out to be an anti-Nazi who was still working in the service, but did everything to get out of Germany and volunteered for that job. And he was married to a Greek woman. But that was much earlier, when, in 1938, we were in Greece for the first time.

Then, the second time, in 1954, after I left zip-fast and we went to Greece and stayed there for three months, when I came back, then there was a question. I must do something. And I talked to Rudi Wittkower, and he said,

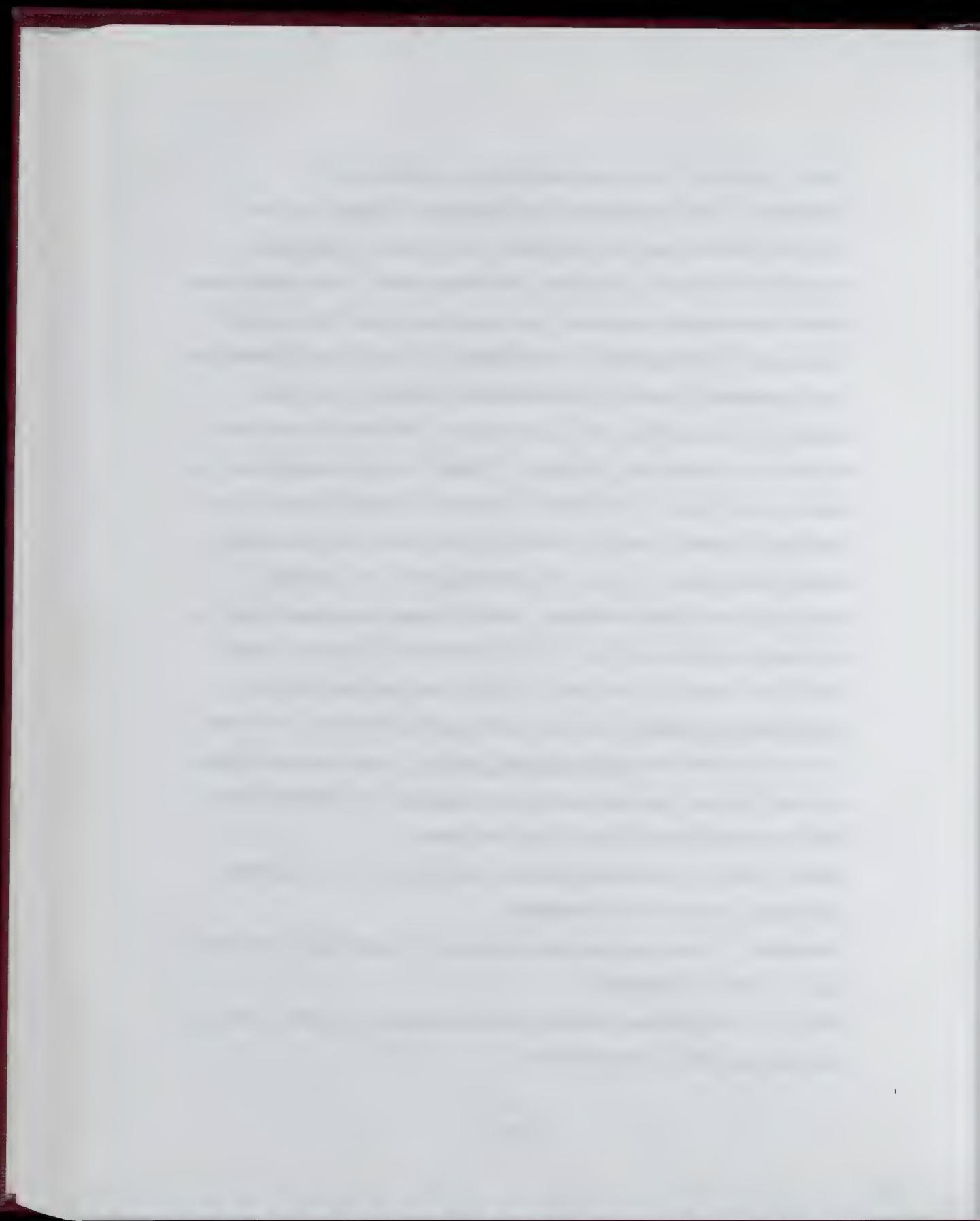


"Well, first of all, you want to have access to libraries." He introduced me, gave me a letter to the British Library and to the RIBA, the [Royal] Institute of British Architects. I think, at that time, I had some idea about modern architecture, and starting from function and functional development. That summer, I must have looked at old nineteenth-century architecture journals and came across a competition for a new style, the Maximilian style, in Munich. That was in 1852, I think, a big competition to make a new style. And there I wrote a little article that that was a wrong idea to invent a new style and would be a wrong idea today. If so, it develops out of, purely starting from, the function. And I later developed that in a little article and sent it to [Nikolaus] Pevsner, who I knew from Leipzig. He was, at the time, editor of the Architecture Review, and he wrote back and said, "It's not an article for the Architecture Review," but he would like to talk to me. And we had lunch together and talked, and he advised me this, that, and the other.

SMITH: Had you had any contact with him or much contact with him prior to this meeting?

HERRMANN: I met him through a mutual friend, so I met him once or twice, perhaps.

SMITH: I think that article was submitted in 1954. That's the dating that I have for it.



HERRMANN: That may-- That is in the--?

SMITH: It's in the [Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities] Archives, yes.

HERRMANN: It's not very-- But anyhow, it wasn't published.

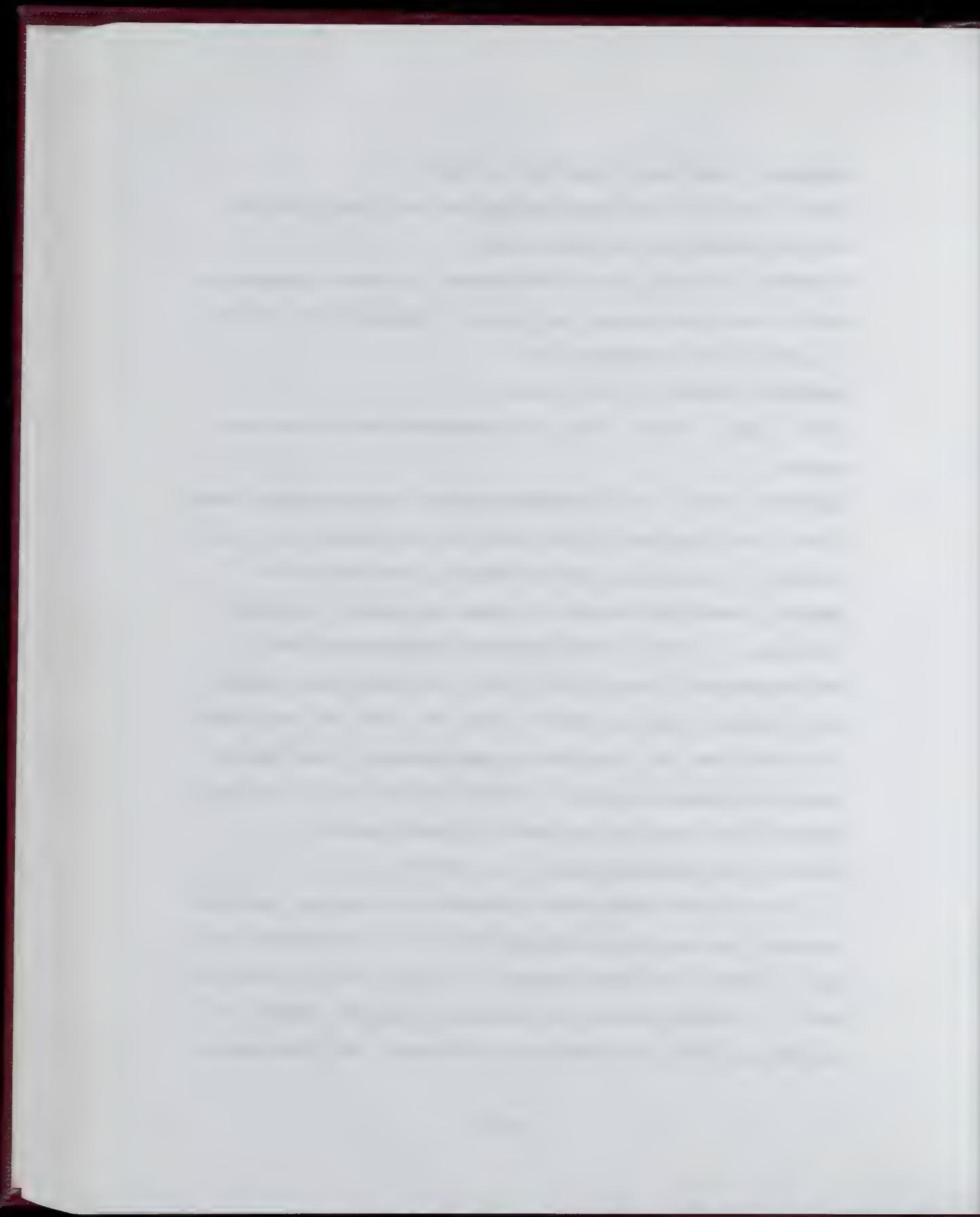
SMITH: What did Pevsner say to you? What was the advice he gave to you, specifically?

HERRMANN: Sorry. I don't know.

SMITH: Well, that's okay. But Wittkower was giving you advice.

HERRMANN: Yes. Well, Wittkower didn't give me advice what to do. He helped me to get back. He introduced me to the Warburg. I met people at the Warburg, and then I met people I knew from before, a number of people. [Leopold] Ettlinger-- I didn't meet [Richard] Krautheimer then. I met Krautheimer later in New York. But there were people I met-- [Ernst] Gombrich wasn't there yet, but, at that time, Fritz Saxl was the director of the Warburg. Then [Henri] Frankfort became director. So Rudi helped me get into the Warburg, get into the Courtauld, to meet people. I probably met [Anthony] Blunt then and so on.

But also he gave me the possibility to go to the RIBA library, the Royal Institute of British Architecture. So I went in there and looked around. I didn't know on what to work. I looked around, and somehow, by purest chance, I looked around at the books on the shelves, and there was a

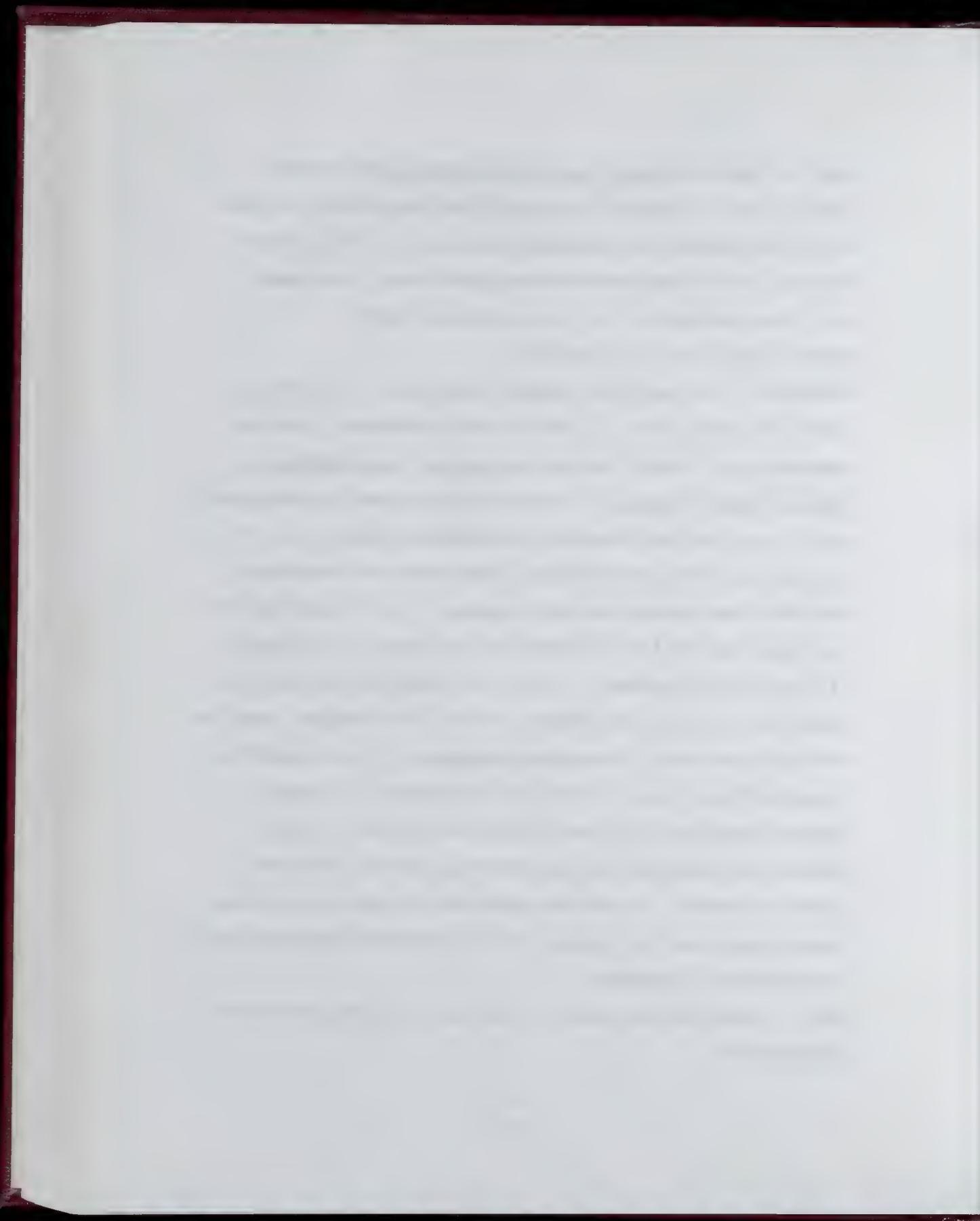


book in English, Essai [sur l'architecture by Laugier]. I took it out in English, in an English translation of 1754 or '55 in London, an atrocious translation. Now I know. I read it, and I was fascinated by that book. That made it. That ticked it. It's as simple as that.

SMITH: This was in '54 or '55?

HERRMANN: That was 1954, after I came back from Greece. And it was that book. I read it and I decided, "That is interesting." When I worked on Laugier [and Eighteenth Century French Theory], I wanted to have some illustration, and I wrote to Joan Evans of the Warburg, whom I met there, and she worked on monasteries. She wrote on a monastery that had some connection with Laugier. So I wrote her, if she could get me the illustration, or where I could get it. And she wrote back. And I just came across that the other day, in which she says: I have read Laugier, and, to tell you the truth, I was not impressed. I also read the French edition, and, to tell you the truth, it didn't impress me at all. I don't think much of it." And I thought her reaction was interesting, because mine was quite different. I took the book out, I read it in a bad translation, and it hit me. And I continued from then on, concentrated on Laugier.

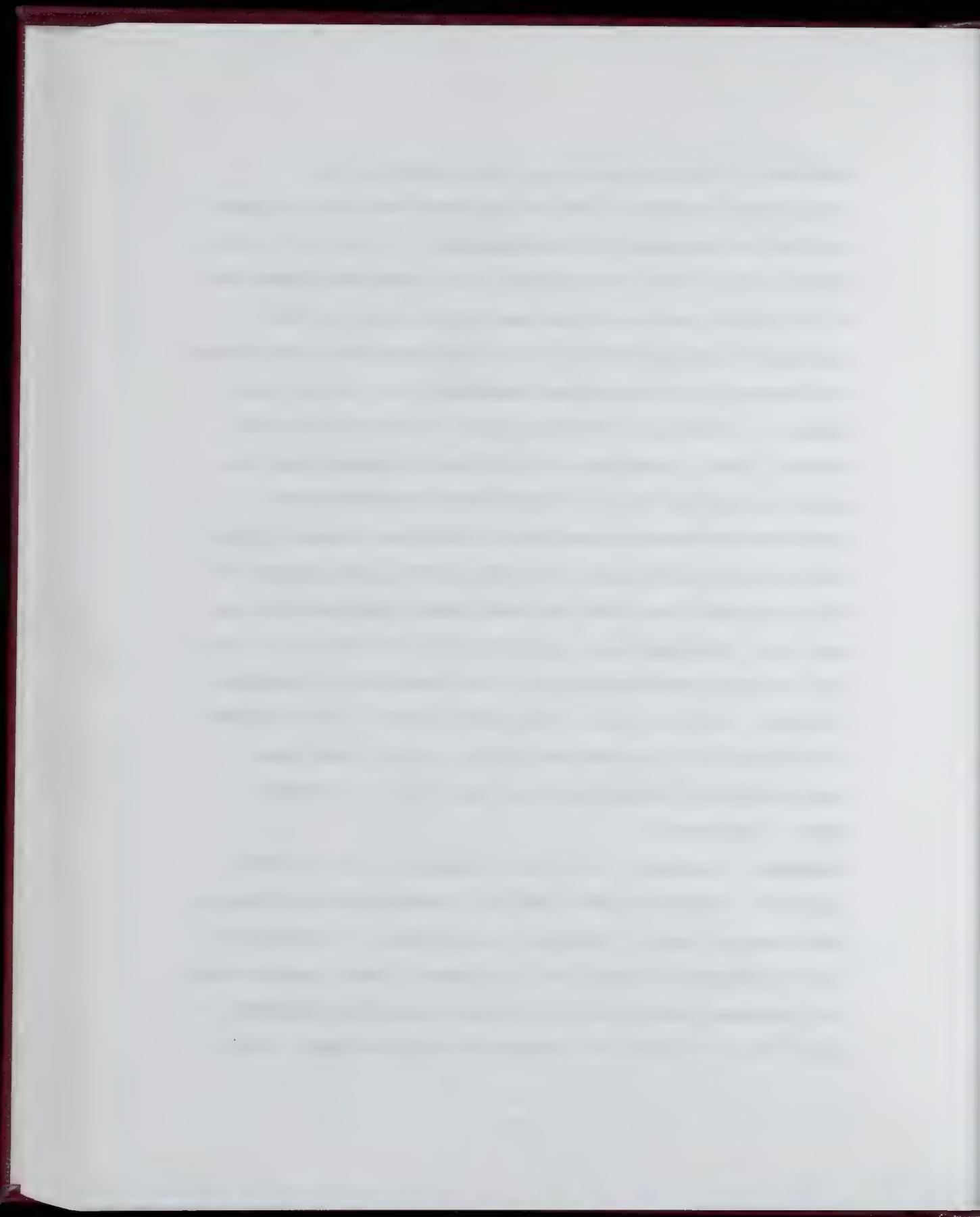
SMITH: What did you think it was that was of particular importance?



HERRMANN: The way he was very clear and his very categorical statement. And he is aware that what he wants and what he proposes is something new. It was very clearly stated even in that translation, but I must soon have read it in French, and the French was a very good, perfect eighteenth-century French. This clearness and distinctness and knowing that he proposes something that is new, that there is a break and something new, that was mainly the reason. Then I continued and widened the scope, and then came the book by [Emil] Kaufmann about revolutionary architecture where he also would talk about Laugier [Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu] I think at that time--that was much later--Rudi wrote to me and said, "Kaufmann will write about it and that will come out, and you should hurry up." But this didn't interfere with me. Later on, when I was much further--The editors of that series were Rudi and Blunt. And at that time, Robin Middleton worked on a man very close to Laugier.

SMITH: Cordemoy?

HERRMANN: Cordemoy. And Blunt suggested that we work together. Middleton was-- No, no. Middleton was in Paris and I was in Paris. Probably through Blunt, he contacted me and proposed we could do it together. But I was already far advanced, and I didn't want to do anything together. I said, "No, I'm sorry--" I must have said it nicely, but I



said, "I'm sorry. I don't." So Middleton did his thing, and I did Laugier. I was absolutely insistent to do Laugier.

SMITH: It took you ten years to do the Laugier study, then.

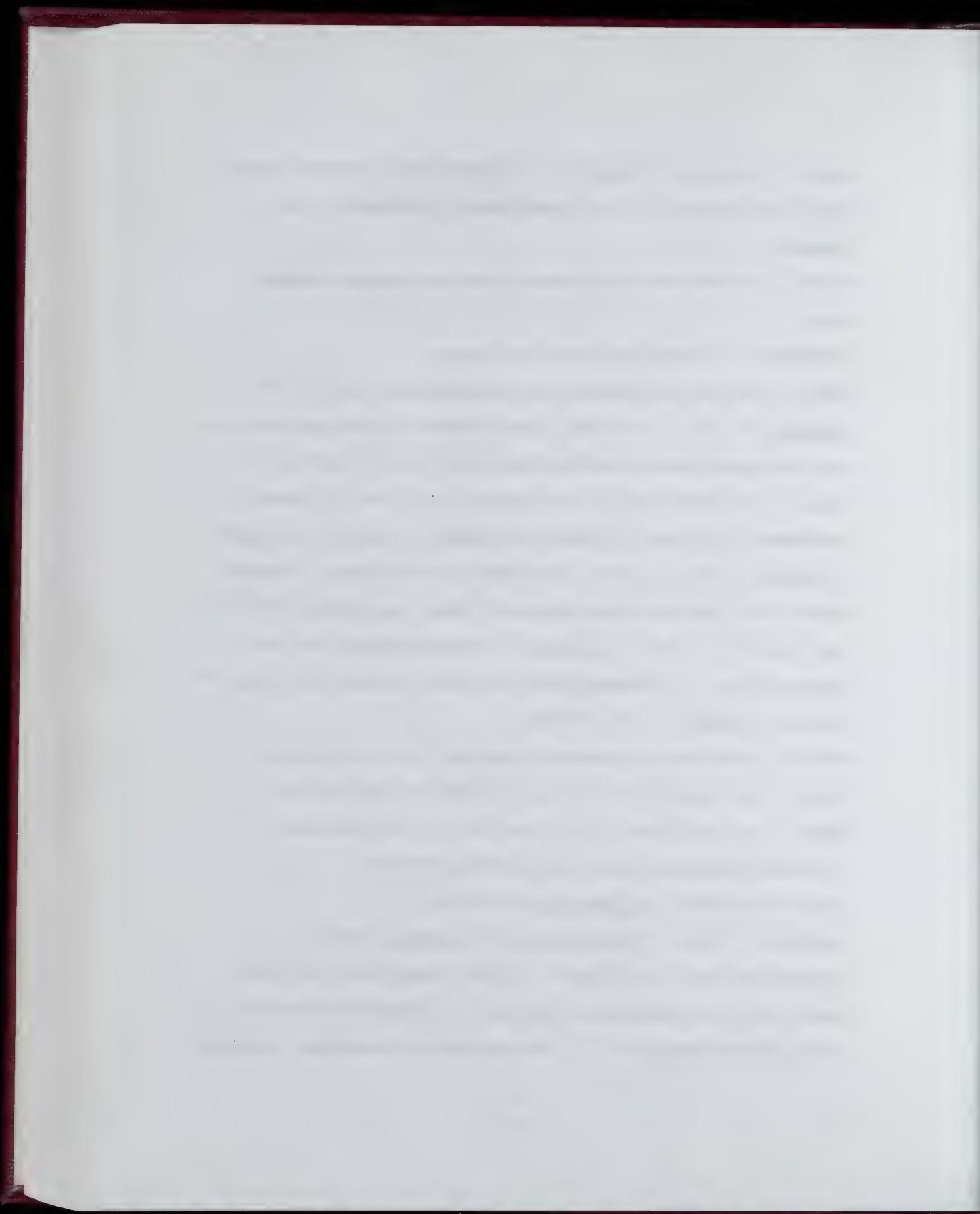
HERRMANN: It must have been ten years.

SMITH: One of the things that intrigues me about the Laugier is that, with that, you go back to art history, but you've turned away from the object and are studying theory. Is that one of the things? What was it about--?

HERRMANN: No, that interest in theory-- Theory interested me always. When I wrote on German architecture, I based quite a lot on what architects at that time had written and said about it, and in Laugier, I concentrated-- He is a theoretician. I concentrated on French theory more, but it is also already in the German.

SMITH: I do want to discuss the book in more detail, but first, I'd like to kind of get a look at the various steps. You had also written an article on Desgodets ["Antoine Desgodets and the Académie Royale d'Architecture," Art Bulletin (1958)]?

HERRMANN: While I was working on Laugier, and in connection [with that work], I went back from his time, back into the seventeenth century, to trace the sources. I came across Desgodets. I thought him interesting. He led



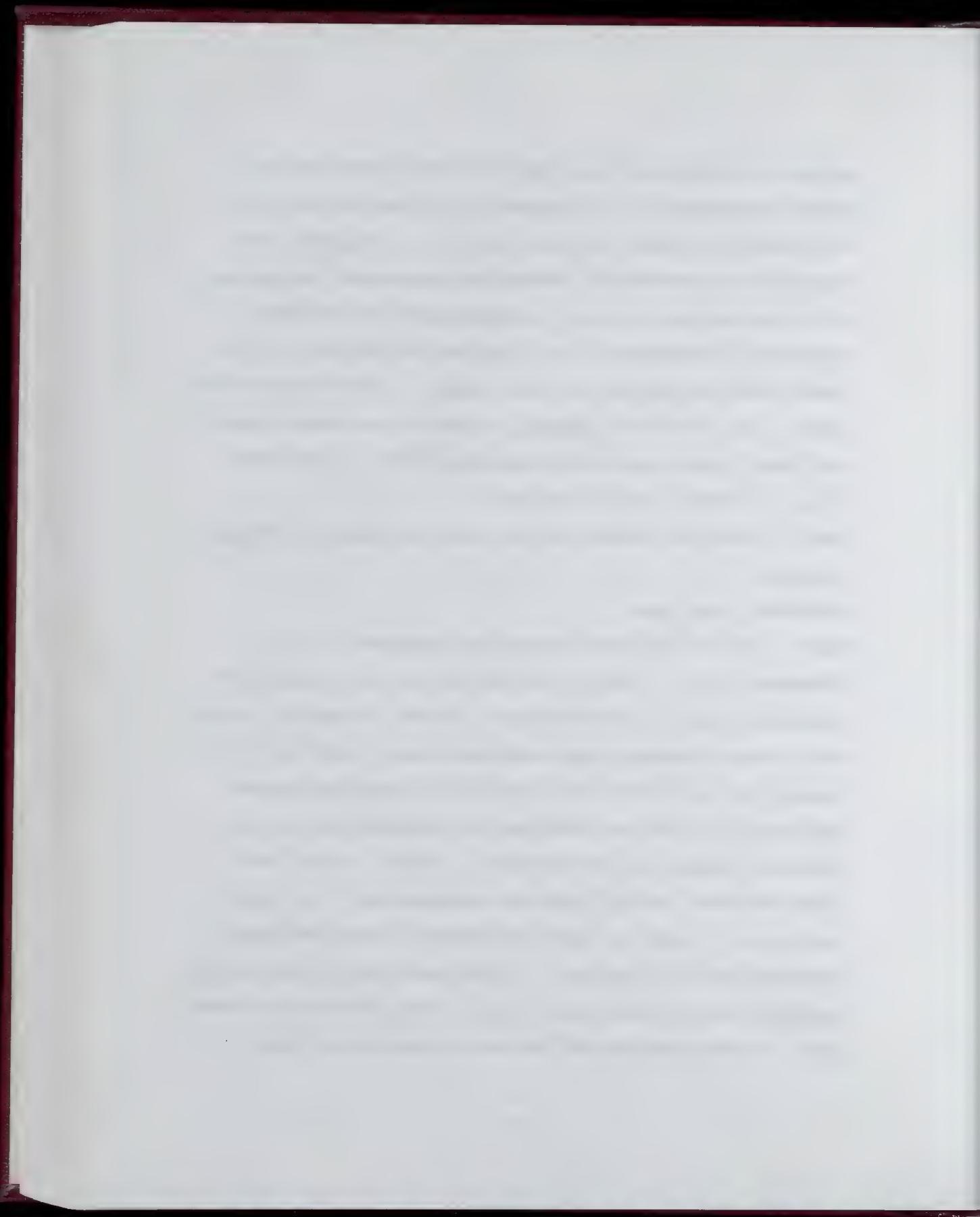
quite an interesting life, but also what-- Much of the theory was based on his measurements of the ancient art, and nobody had really written about him. Desgodets was constantly mentioned all through the centuries, but he was not a real person; he was the measurements of antiques according to Desgodets. So I studied him and went to the French archives and so on. And there, I wrote that article while I was working on Laugier, which is more than I ever did, that I could work on two personalities at the same time. I couldn't do it later on.

SMITH: Wittkower helped you get that published in the Art Bulletin?

HERRMANN: Yes, yes.

SMITH: Was he the first person you submitted it to?

HERRMANN: Yes. I sent it to Rudi in the first case, and he wrote to me very encouragingly, which-- He said--I think this letter is also in the archives--when I left art history, he and others developed art history and relied much more on facts and archives and material and written [material] about the theoretical, I think. And he was surprised that, while I did zip fasteners and then came back to it, I made the same development, which was very pleasant for me to be told. And he submitted it to the Art Bulletin, and at that time, it was-- The editor was-- Never mind. He was very helpful to edit it and get it into



shape. [James S. Ackerman]

SMITH: We can get that later. What was Wittkower doing before he went to the United States?

HERRMANN: He worked in the Warburg. He also taught at London University [College], and he should have become the director. And they let him go, which really--

SMITH: Do you know why? Did he ever mention why he thought--?

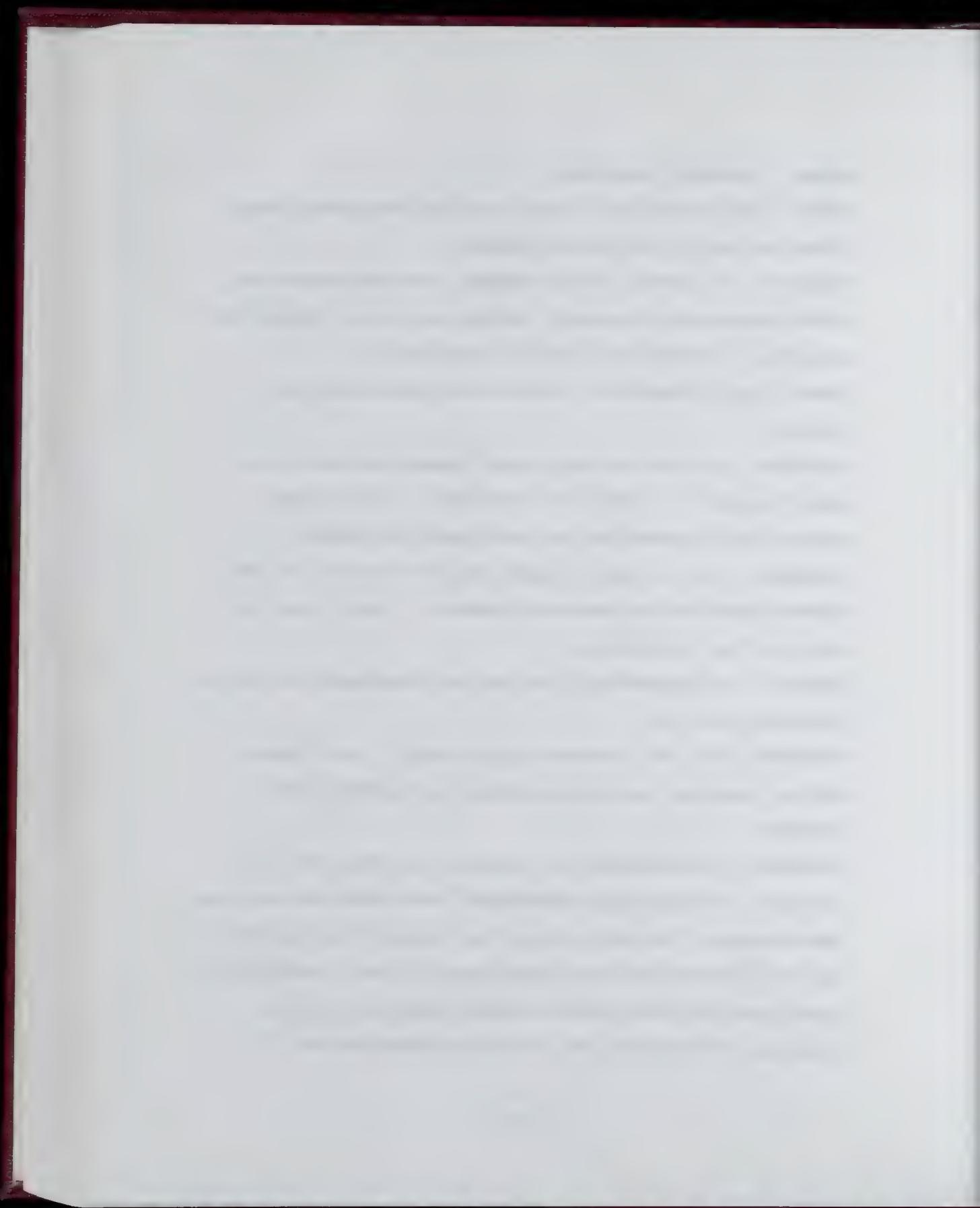
HERRMANN: I'm not entirely sure. Money most certainly played a part. I think-- Is this silly of me to say? Because that information you could get from Margot Wittkower. You can get it even from the man who, at the moment, works on the Warburg's papers. I mean, they all know why they let him go.

SMITH: I was wondering if he had ever mentioned to you his feelings about it.

HERRMANN: No, no. I think it is-- Well, I don't know.

SMITH: What was the nature of his relationship with Pevsner?

HERRMANN: He recognized his quality, but they were so different, so completely different, that there was no close relationship. He once told me that Pevsner invited him, and they came to see him. They came into his [Pevsner's] house, and they were horrified that there was not any artistic, not objects, but the whole thing was as



[inaudible] as possible, and that's quite different from how he [Wittkower] lived. Art, in the widest sense, played an enormous part in his whole outlook. And that he told me. There was nothing. He appreciated Pevsner, most certainly, but they were too, too different.

SMITH: In Pevsner's letter to you, he mentions that they are particularly interested in social-planning issues--this is in 1954--and that he might be interested in your working on mid-nineteenth-century German urban planning. Did that interest you?

HERRMANN: That he told me?

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: No, no.

SMITH: That didn't interest you?

HERRMANN: Oh, I mean he didn't mention that to me.

SMITH: No, it's in the letter to you.

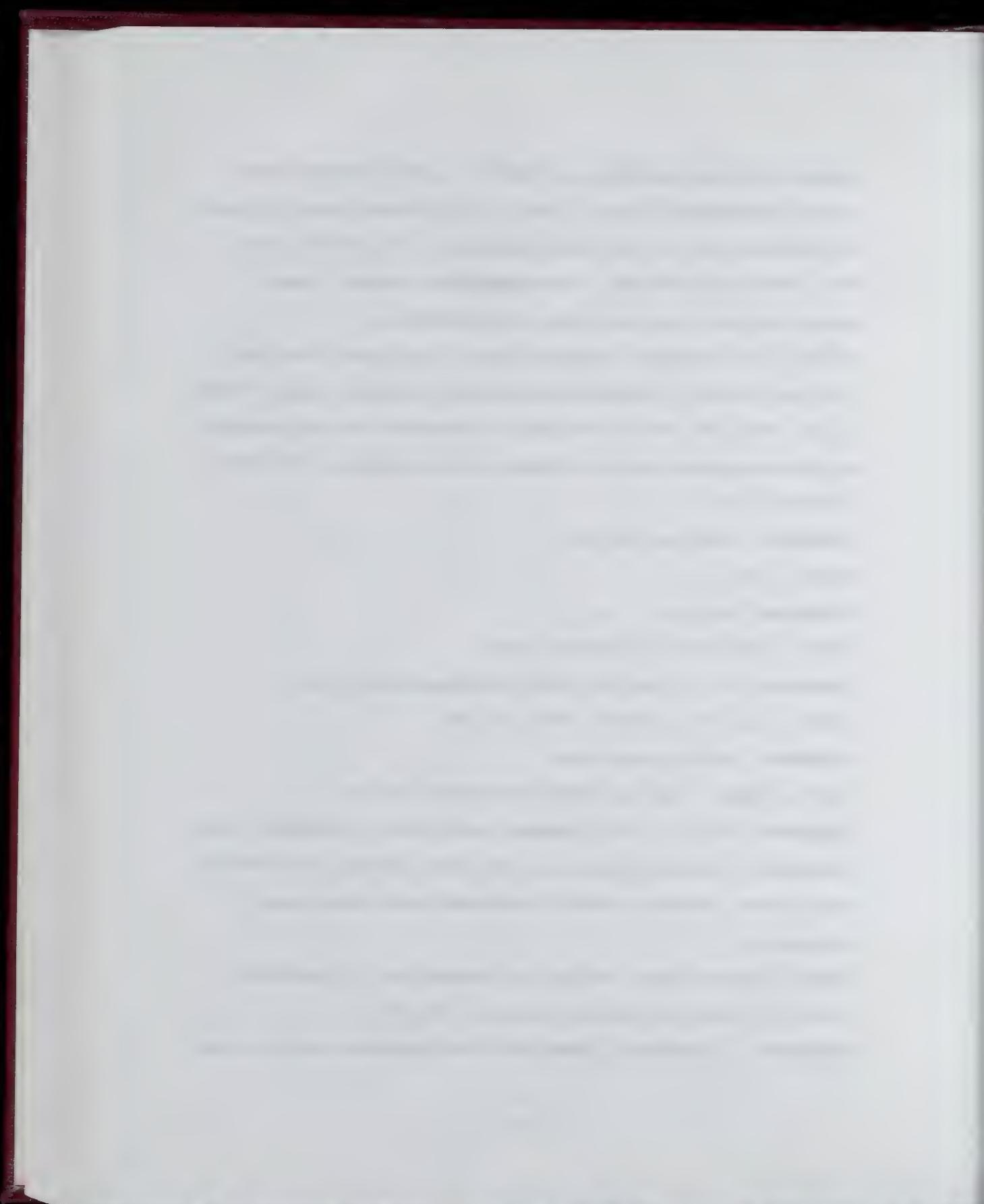
HERRMANN: Oh, he says that?

SMITH: Yeah. But you didn't follow up on it?

HERRMANN: No, no. You remember more than I remember, that obviously-- There, I must say, he asked me that in a letter when I was-- Either I don't know when that letter was written--

SMITH: 'Fifty-four, and you had submitted-- It was the letter in which he turned down your article.

HERRMANN: I remember I sent him the Desgodets article, and



he acknowledged that somehow. No, I only answered that way because, when the letter came, then I was already on Laugier. Anything he suggested on mid-nineteenth-century German architecture didn't interest me.

SMITH: Right. How did you feel about Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism, Wittkower's book?

HERRMANN: Wittkower's Principles, a great book. It's an important book for architects and architectural historians.

SMITH: That book came out about the time you decided to leave zip fasteners and go back into art history.

HERRMANN: If it appeared while I was still in zip fasteners, then we wouldn't have talked about it. I didn't know what he was doing, except when he was living with us, he worked on Burlington [Magazine] and that he mentioned. But if it came later, then I had this book, and I read it with great interest.

SMITH: An important aspect of it is challenging the importance of making aesthetic judgments, downplaying the importance of stating one's own aesthetic judgment of a work of art and, instead, looking at its reception and the impact of that work. It seems like your approach and his were actually very parallel.

HERRMANN: Yes, yes. Oh, yes. I mean, we never actually wrote on the same subject, but the way whatever we wrote is very much, I think--



SMITH: In '58, Blunt and Wittkower talked to you about doing the Laugier book for the Desmond Zwemmer series. How far along were you at that time with your Laugier studies?

HERRMANN: In '58?

SMITH: 'Fifty-eight.

HERRMANN: There, he must have, I think, warned me of Kaufmann's book. So there I was. I don't know exactly, but the book appeared in '62.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: Very likely, by '60, or thereabouts, I must have finished it, until it came out '60, '61. In '58, I must have been fairly far.

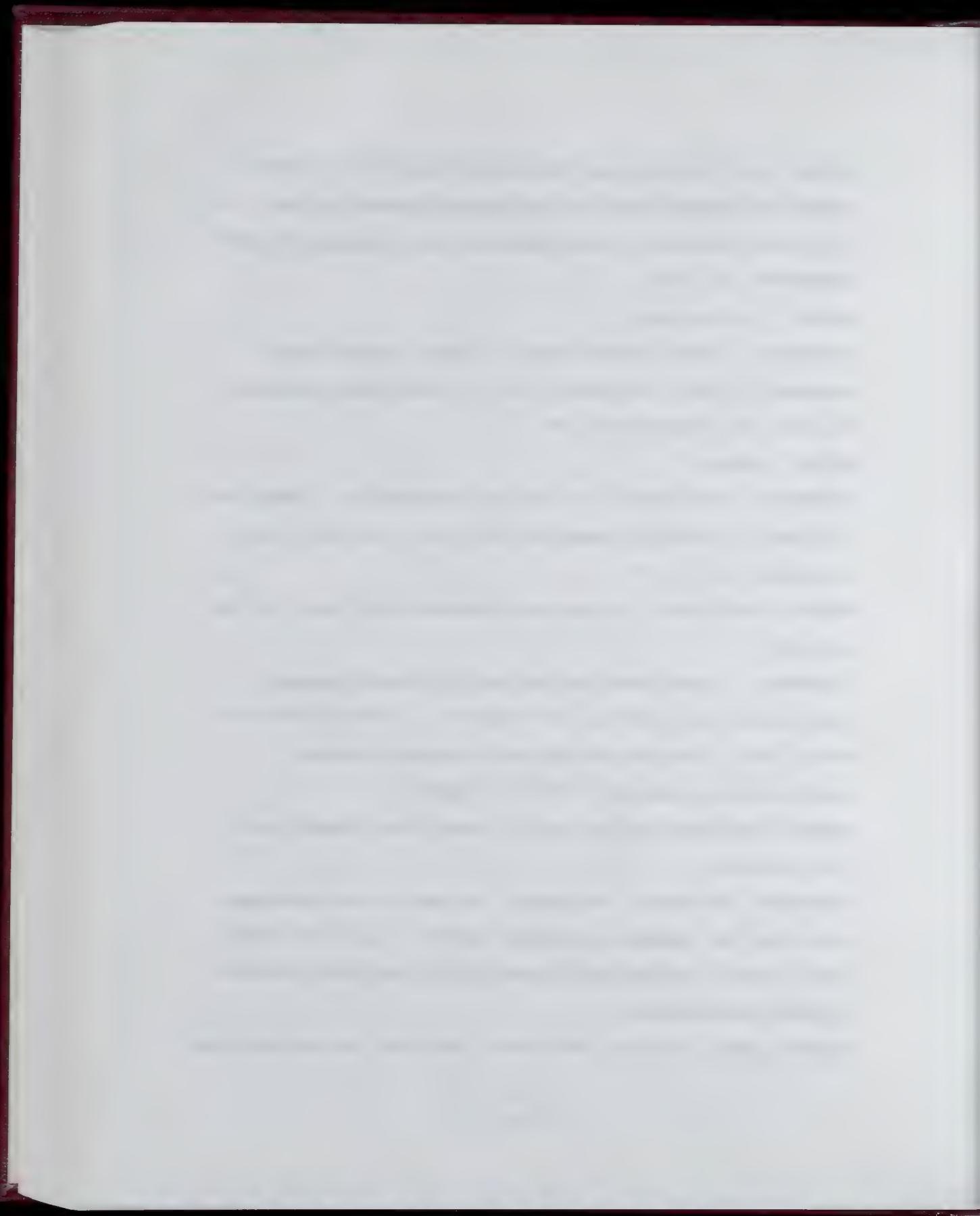
SMITH: Let's see. You had met Anthony Blunt prior to the series?

HERRMANN: I must have met him mainly through Laugier. Rudi and he were editing that series. I probably met him early, but I had not met him at Wittkower's before. I could have met him, but I don't remember.

SMITH: How close did you get to him? How friendly were you with him?

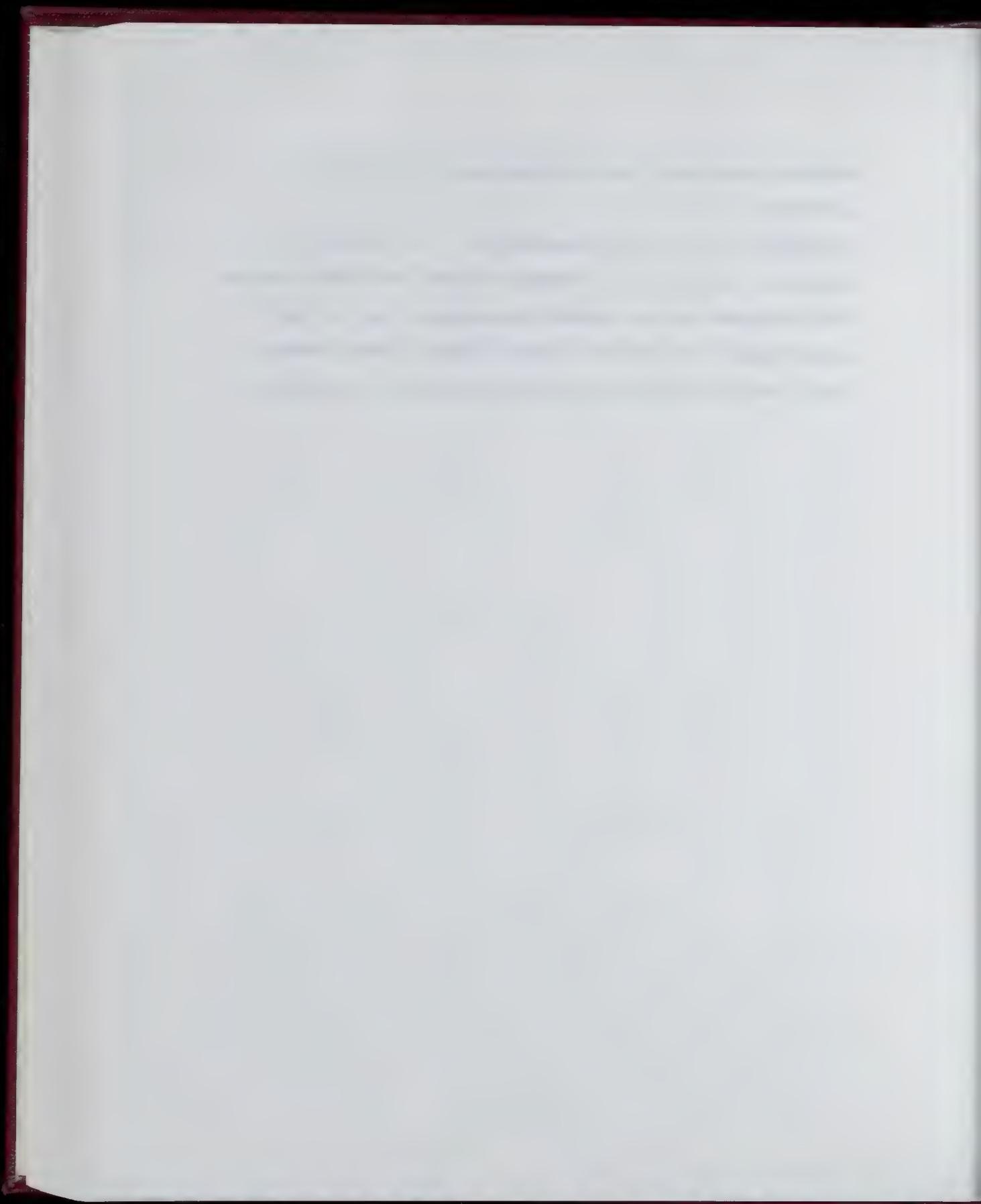
HERRMANN: Friendly, very good. We went to the lectures, and after the lectures he always asked us up to his room for a drink. He was very friendly, but we didn't see him outside professional.

SMITH: Okay. Did you have any--? We might as well get the



obvious questions. Did you have any intimation of his politics?

HERRMANN: No, I didn't know at all. It came as a surprise. But I know-- Probably I knew that when the two [Guy Burgess and Kim Philby] disappeared that he was interviewed, that he was-- That I think I knew through Rudi. But no suspicion on Rudi's side nor on my side.



TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

SMITH: Okay. You were saying that--

HERRMANN: I said that I only knew through [Rudolf] Wittkower. I saw [Anthony] Blunt; I had no idea until it came out. I felt terrible. It's awful. And I wrote him a letter saying I want him to know that it's not-- Something. I don't know explicitly. And he wrote back and said, "I'm sorry." He must have felt awful. That was terrible.

SMITH: What was your attitude towards the Cold War? Your personal feelings about the postwar world situation?

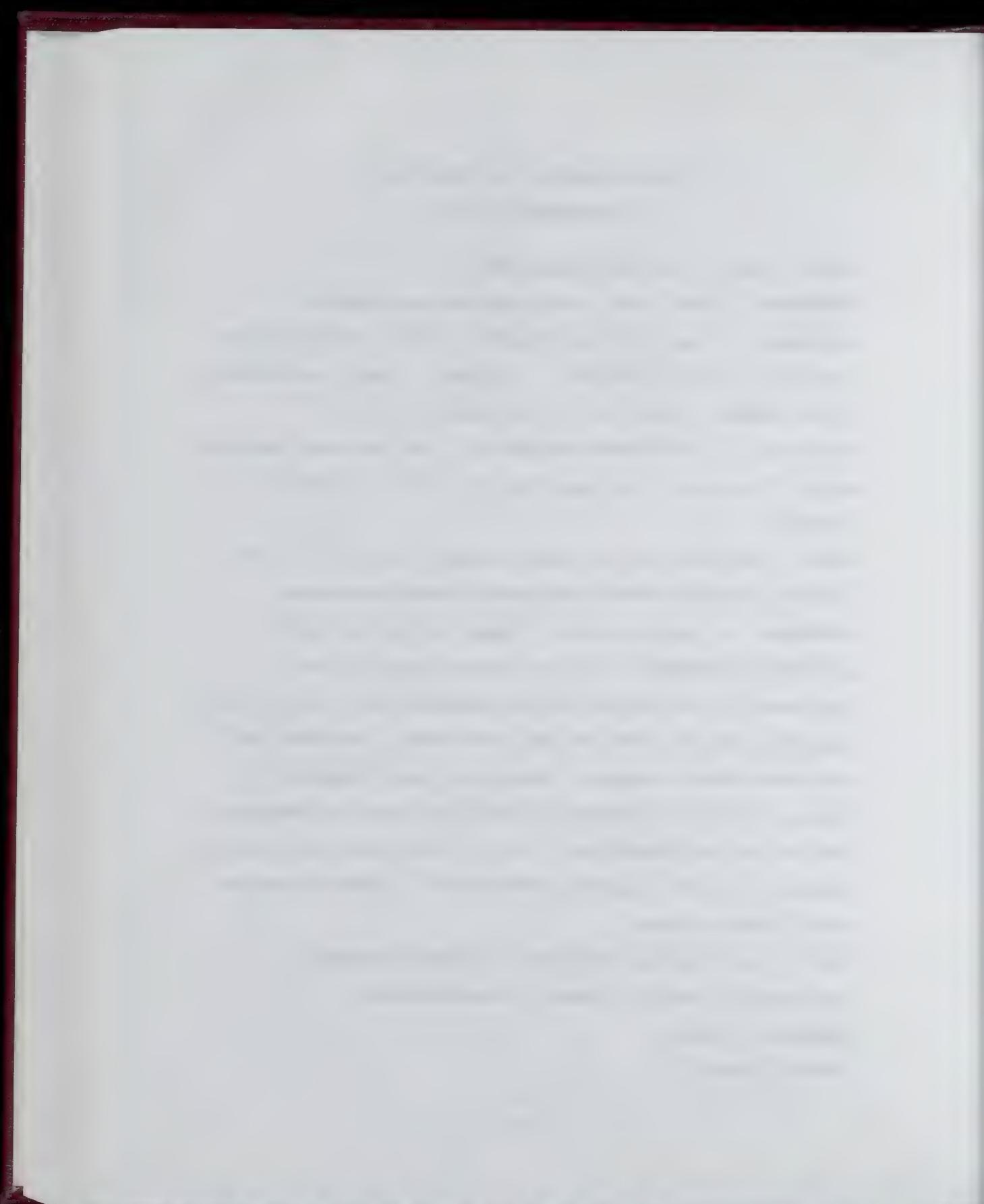
HERRMANN: It was terrible. I mean, it was wrong to-- probably unavoidable--but, of course, right at the beginning, to be hostile to the Russians, with whom we had together just finished the war, was wrong. But that is very much with hindsight. Everything which happened in Russia, which was completely wrong, was bound to happen as soon as you cut Russia out. But, I mean, that goes back to prewar. And what happened under Stalin, I didn't know or didn't want to know.

SMITH: Politically, where did you place yourself?

Politically, were you Labour? Conservative?

HERRMANN: Labour.

SMITH: Labour.



HERRMANN: Labour, yes. The left part of Labour or something like that.

SMITH: Maybe the answer to this is obvious, but I need to ask it anyway. Since you have a nephew [Markus Wolf] sort of, who was a leading figure in the East German security police, the Stasi, and Blunt was in the KGB, is there any connection there in terms of--? I mean, do you think Blunt was aware of your family connections in East Germany?

HERRMANN: No. I mean, you refer to Markus Wolf, but I must have told you before, my sister [Ruth Herrmann] lived in Dresden, and her daughter's stepbrother, one of them, was Markus Wolf. When I asked, "What is Markus Wolf or the other one [Conrad Wolf] doing?" then they always said, "Oh, government, something." It was never-- I knew, whatever he was doing, he probably-- Eventually, I knew he must have been in the secret service. And he was, of course, influential. When my niece wanted to immigrate to Cuba, he helped her, and in many ways he could help. But that was-- He was in the secret service, like many people here are in MI-5 [British security service]. Many honorable [people] are in MI-5, and Markus Wolf is an honorable citizen of the DDR [German Democratic Republic] and is in the Stasi. Personally, I think anybody who wants to become an agent of MI-5, there is something wrong with his character, if he wants to be. But there are people who probably are

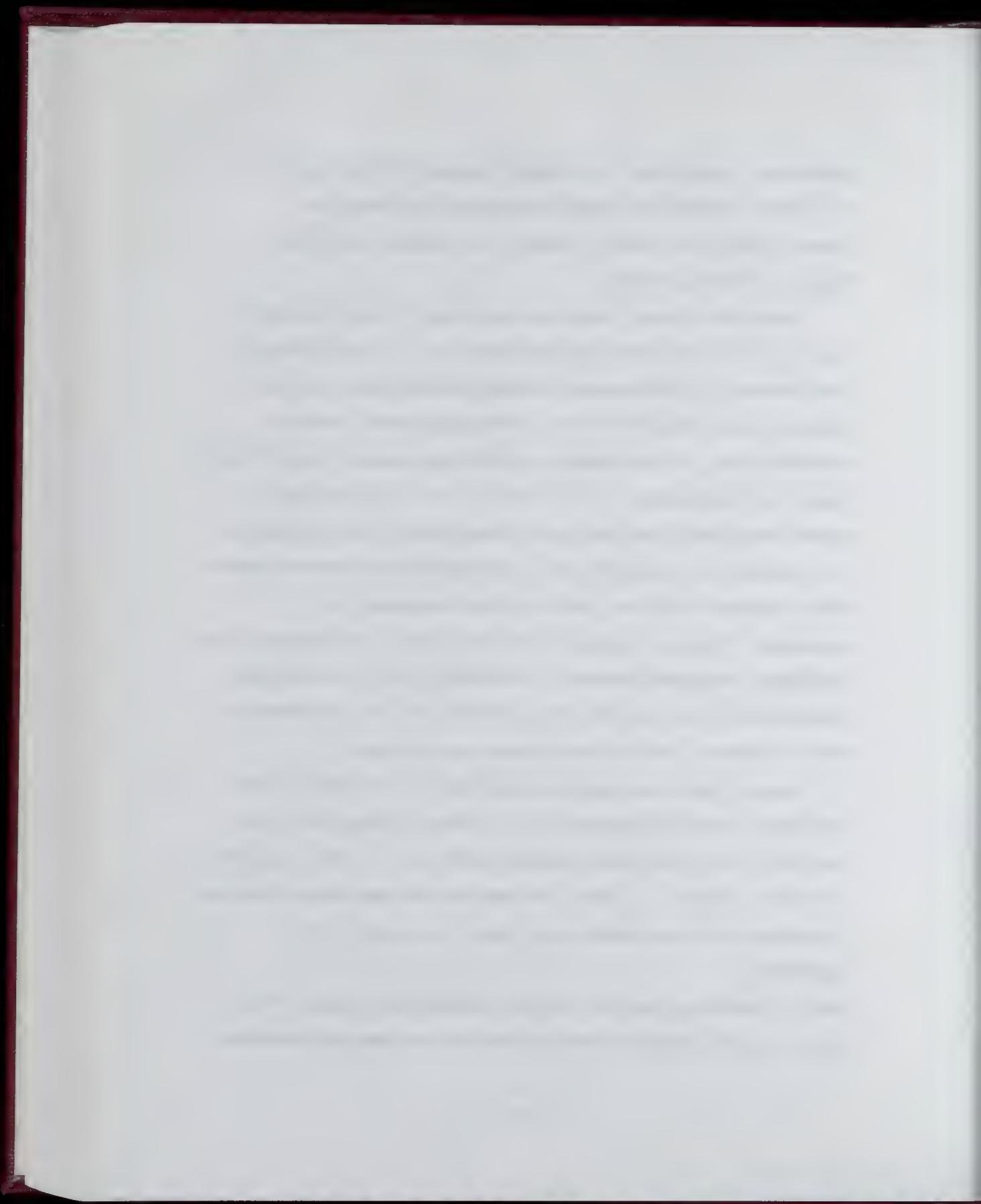


perfectly, you think, all right, except if they want to be. Some of them in lesser positions may have been forced. But that didn't apply. And Markus Wolf was a Stasi, a leading Stasi.

The Stasi affair came out now, and I still think-- I mean, so much has been written about it. I still think that there is a difference between surveillance of the citizens and doing MI-5 work, anti-espionage, which a citizen loyal to his country should do, except that I think that, as a character, it's wrong. I don't think that Markus Wolf has done much more than that. And he planted his agents, of course he did, and so did the Germans plant their agents with him, with [Erich] Honecker, or whatever. That is a game which they play. The French, the Italians, everybody spies on everybody else. And he was successful. But now the Stasi affair is not so innocent. That is worse. But I don't think that he is--

Once I think my niece passed him on the street, and she said, "This is Markus Wolf." That is the only time I met him. The other one [Conrad Wolf] was, I think, quite a different person. I mean, he was not in the Stasi, but was a director of the academy and was a very good film producer.

SMITH: Getting back to the art history and Blunt, what kind of criticisms did Blunt give you as you were working



on your manuscript [Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory]? What was the nature of his suggestions?

HERRMANN: There is a letter from him where he criticized quite a lot, and I think you'd best refer to that letter. He did one thing: he corrected and translated a lot of the French quotations I had translated. Then he, Blunt, was an excellent stylist, and he improved the manuscript.

SMITH: So he went through the manuscript very carefully?

HERRMANN: He went through the manuscript and improved on there. And he made a criticism, but you'd best look up that letter.

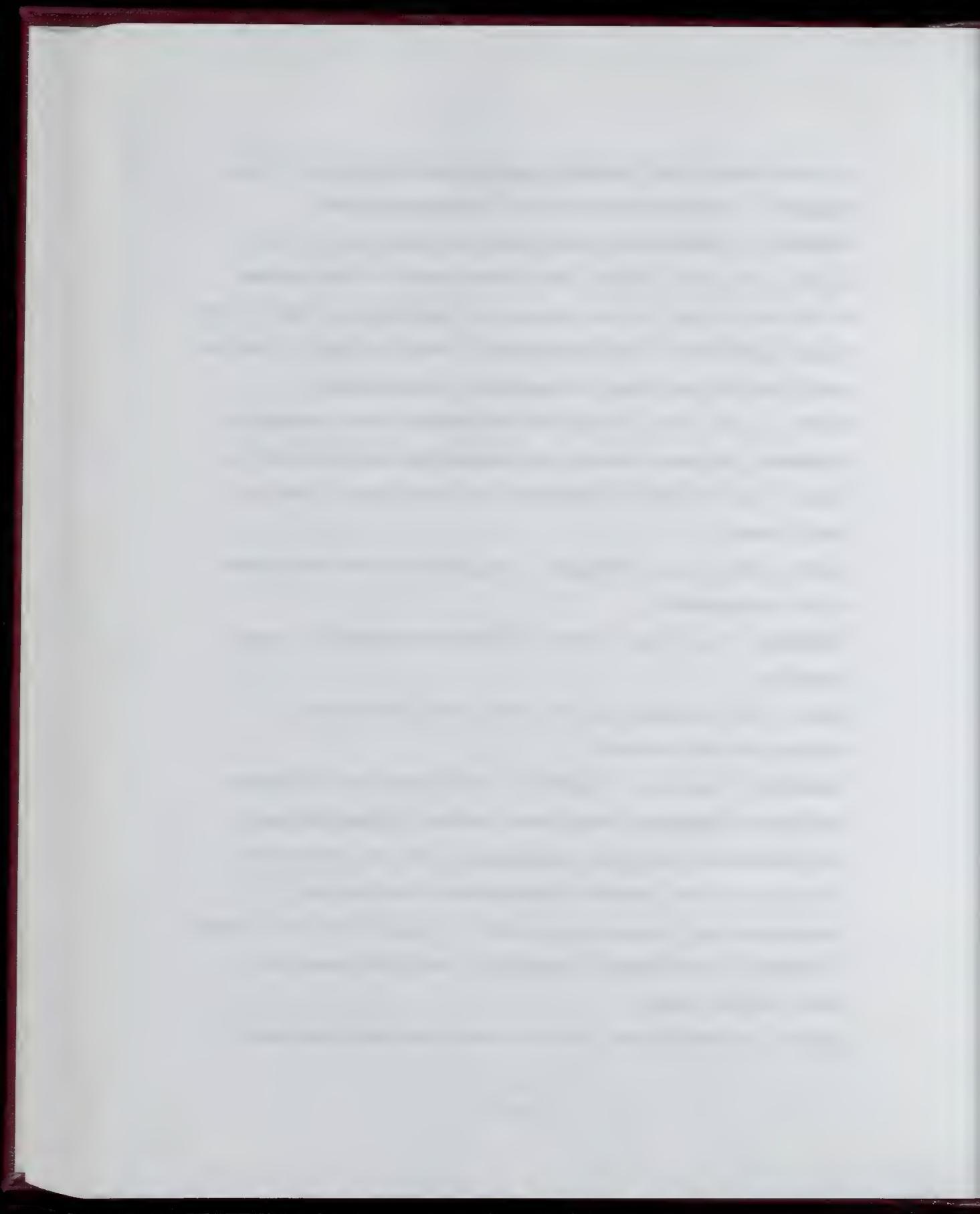
SMITH: What about Wittkower's suggestions and criticisms of the manuscript?

HERRMANN: No, I don't think he made criticisms. I don't think so.

SMITH: The structure of the book, had you already determined that before?

HERRMANN: Yes, yes. I did it, and I stuck to it against what Blunt suggested once, that he didn't like the way I put appendices with full quotations. And he wanted me-- probably in that letter he mentioned it--either to incorporate or to give more notes, I forget now. But there I thought I was right. From how it would be received, I think it was right.

SMITH: So the chapter division came strictly from you?



HERRMANN: It came from me. The whole structure developed gradually, the main subjects, as they developed, as I did research. And then I put it in order and thought of certain subjects and so on. Eventually, it became quite organized.

SMITH: How did your [C. N.] Ledoux article ["The Problem of Chronology in Ledoux's Engraved Designs," Art Bulletin (1960)] relate to the work you were doing with Laugier?

HERRMANN: I am not quite sure whether that came at the same time or came during the Paris time. I'm not sure.

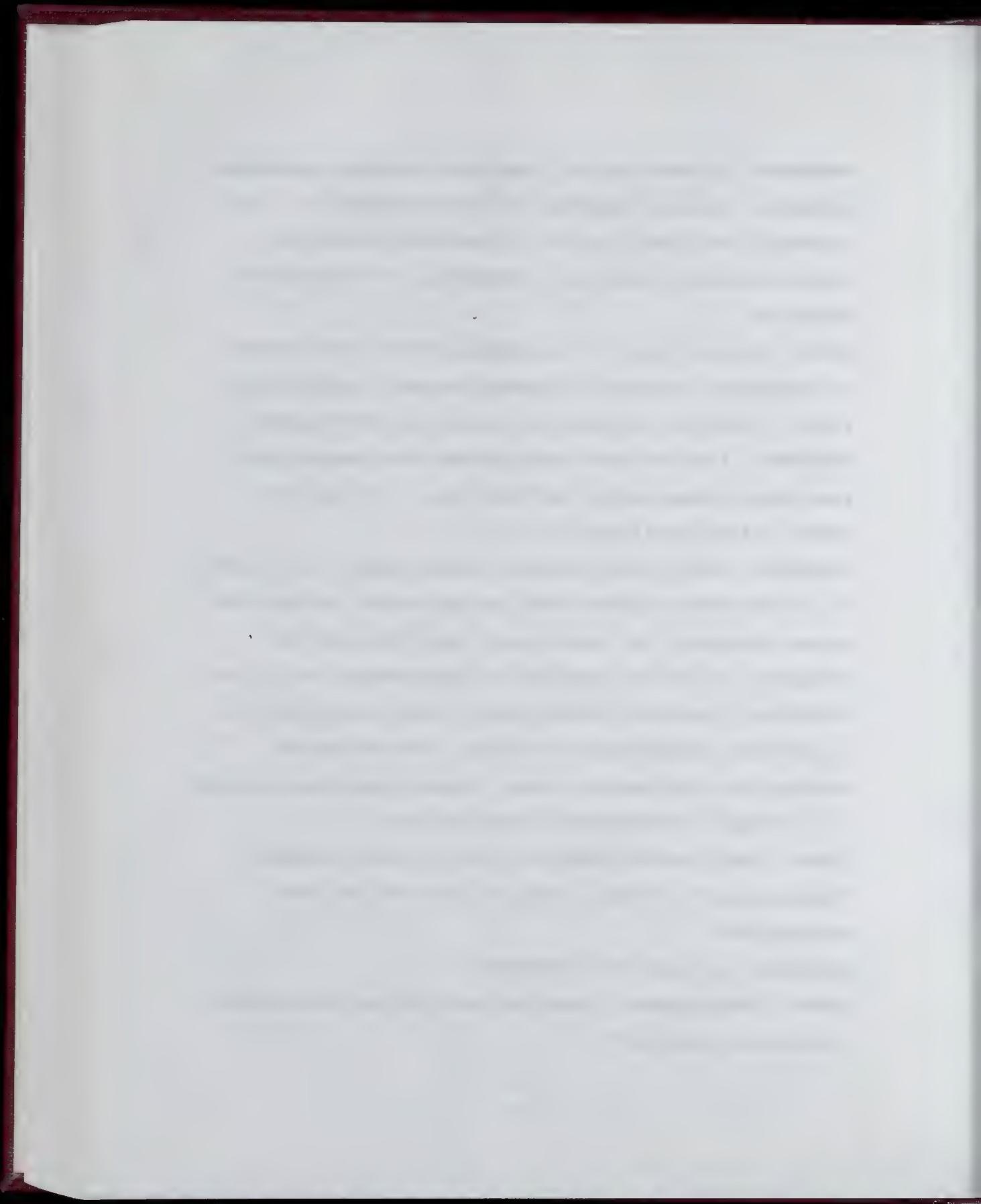
SMITH: It was published in 1960.

HERRMANN: Then I must have come across Ledoux, and I wrote an article where I proved that the engravings, as they are always published, are quite a ways away from what he designed. So it came very much to measurements, etc. The difference I probably noticed while I was working on-- No, I must have already been on Laugier. And the end of Laugier goes into Ledoux's time. There I must have noticed it, and then I finished the Ledoux article.

SMITH: David Watkin refers to it as a, quote, unquote, "revolutionary" article. Were you aware as you were writing it--?

HERRMANN: He said "revolutionary"?

SMITH: Revolutionary. Were you aware of how controversial the article might be?



HERRMANN: Oh, this article on Ledoux?

SMITH: Ledoux.

HERRMANN: No. I don't know that. Watkin says--

SMITH: In his The Rise of Architectural History he refers to that article as a revolutionary article, because it was an important step in demolishing the interpretation of the roots of modernism that [Nikolaus] Pevsner had developed.

HERRMANN: I've got the book. I've got the book. I think I read what he said, and I don't know what he meant.

SMITH: But, when you were writing it, did you have any sense of this article as an important statement in terms of debates that were going on?

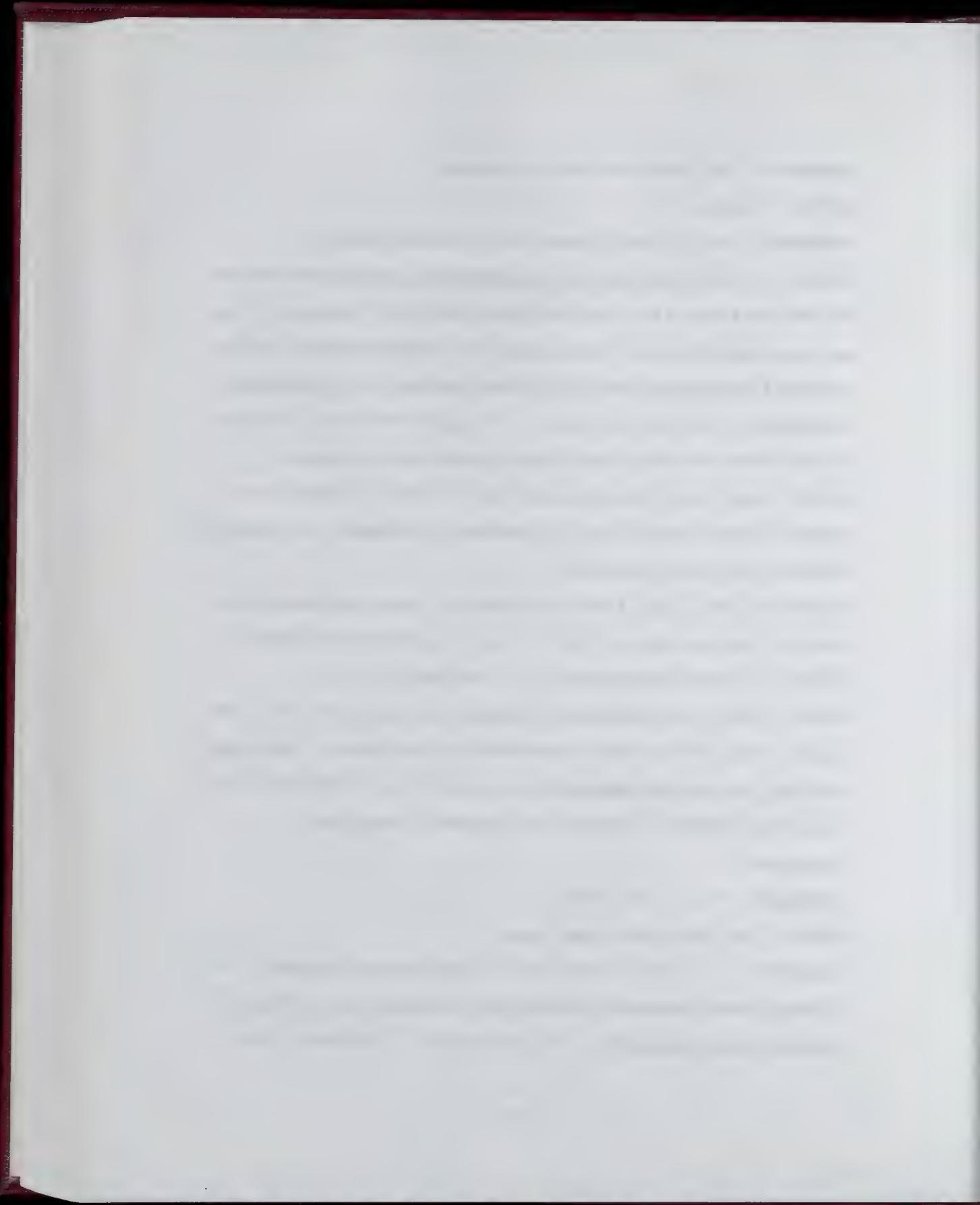
HERRMANN: No. No, I don't think so. Any recollection I have of the article is that it was a painstaking affair, which is quite interesting, but not that I-- No.

SMITH: Well, for instance, Pevsner, as early as 1941, had argued that Ledoux was a precursor of Corbusier. And your article, given the arguments you make, would demolish this idea that there's a connection between Ledoux and Corbusier.

HERRMANN: Did I say that?

SMITH: No, you didn't say that.

HERRMANN: No. Oh, I see. No, it was not my object. But I would have objected against this Pevsner view. That I wouldn't have accepted. But my article, I'm sure I had



nothing in mind.

SMITH: No. In fact, you don't mention Pevsner at all in your article. You mention Helen Rosenau and Emil Kaufmann and are challenging the conclusions they've made about Ledoux. How well did you know Rosenau or Kaufmann?

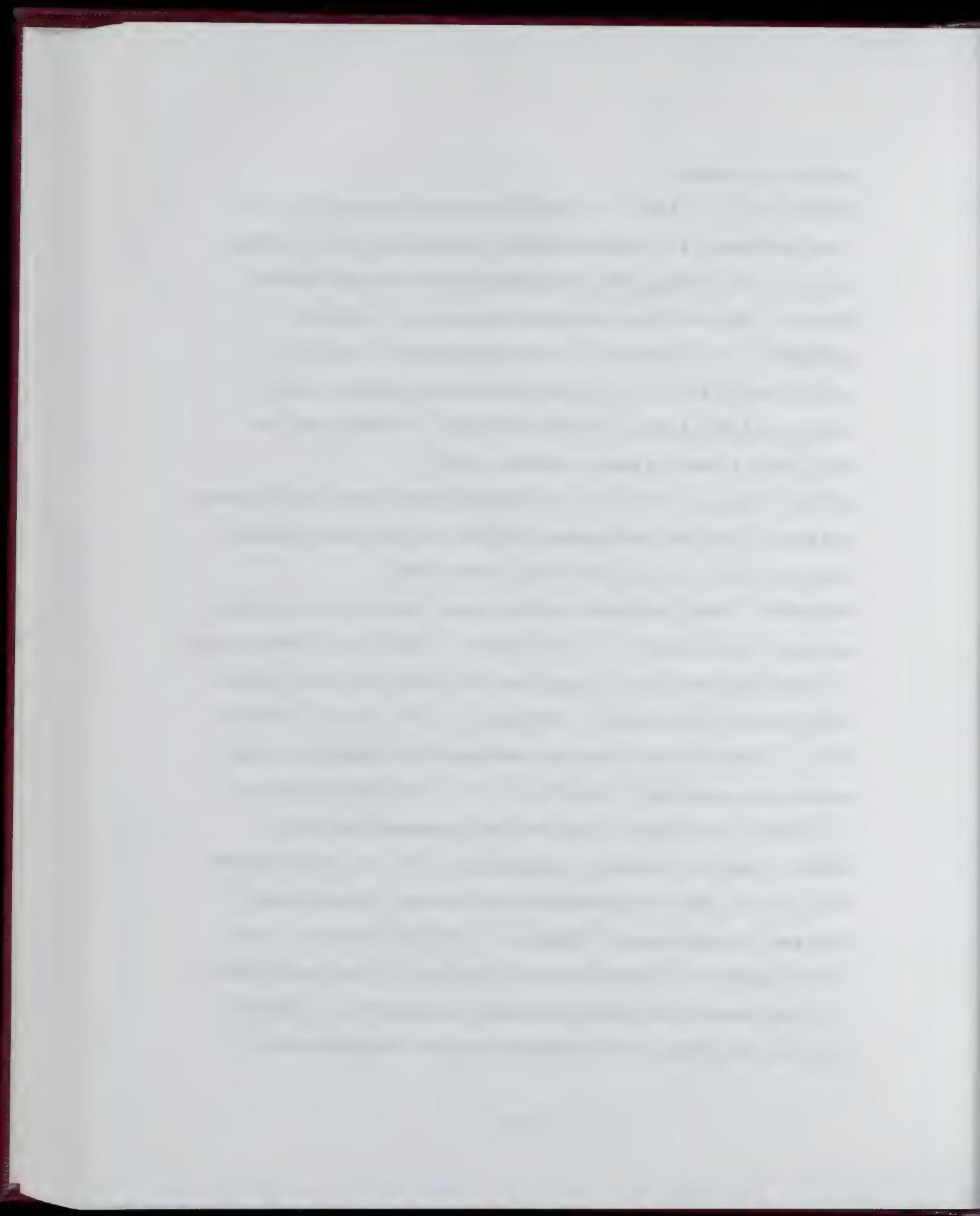
HERRMANN: Helen Rosenau I knew quite well. But I-- I can't really talk. I'd like to see what Watkin said. I can't read the Ledoux article because I haven't got it.

But, yes, I see. [tape recorder off]

SMITH: When we left off, we were talking about your Ledoux article. And you were going to look in the David Watkin book and see what he had to say about you.

HERRMANN: This, he says--and not even in inverted commas-- he says "revolution" in this article. Well, it's very nice to have written, but I never had the idea that that upsets and reorders the whole. Nothing. I just wanted-- What I said, "Ledoux's work will be evaluated differently if my dates are accepted." But that's all. So what he says-- It's what he followed from the consequences he drew.

SMITH: But the current interpretation of not only Pevsner, but-- Well, the interpretation of Pevsner, [Siegfried] Giedion, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, [Walter] Gropius, and their approach to architectural history is that everything is instrumental to their modernist architectural agenda. And so everything is interpreted in its relationship--

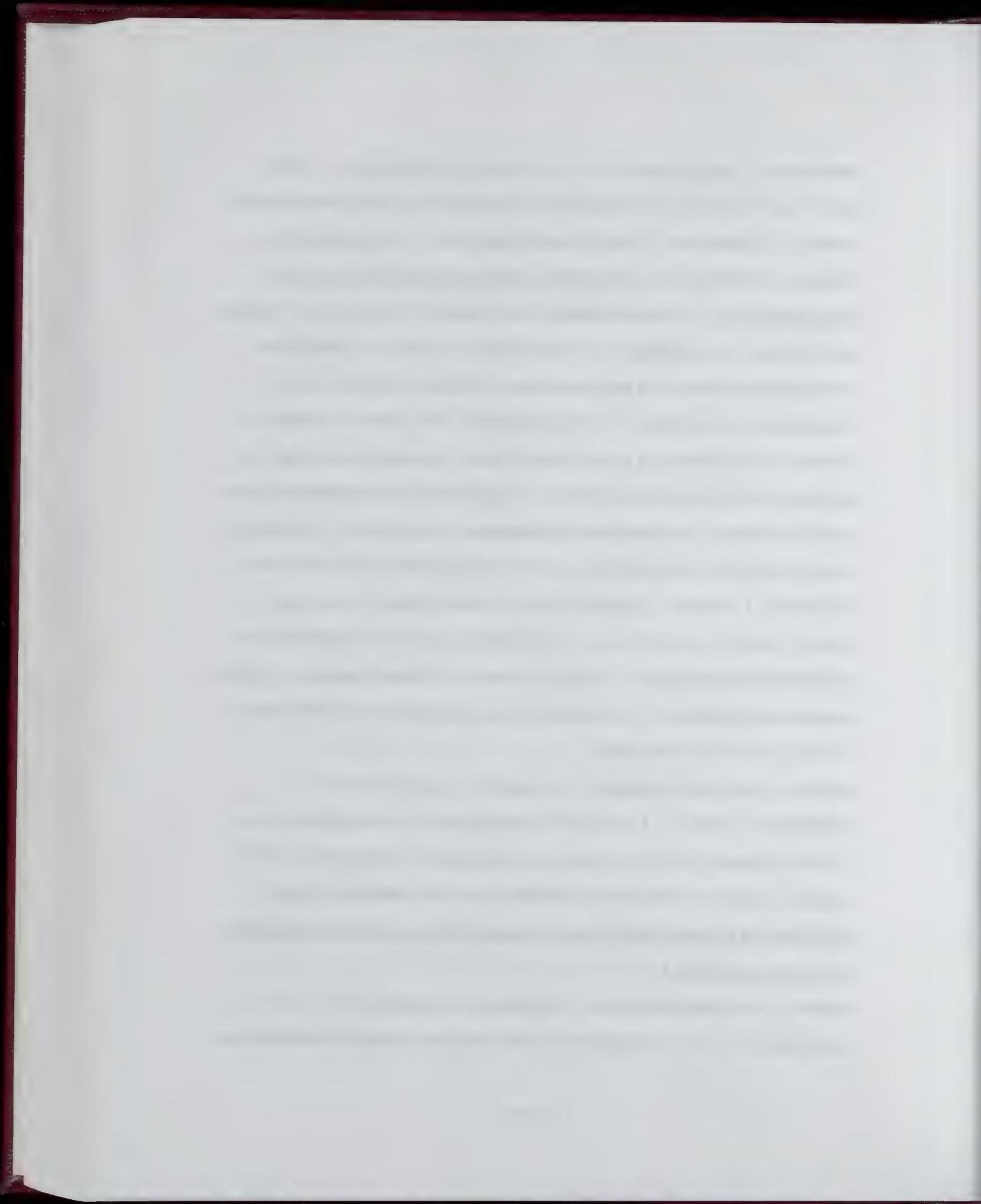


HERRMANN: They relate it to modern architecture, yeah. And I am inclined to say that's where the root developed. Today, I disagree. But I must say that, in the book on German architecture [Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts], I wrote about the time of [Heinrich] Hübsch and others who wanted to find a new style and said that never before was a time as close to what we now want. Something like this. I only know it now that I wrote it. I mean, I've known it for some time, because somebody in Germany in the sixties wrote a book and criticized me very much on this, took me for a Bauhaus fiend [who] related everything to the Bauhaus or to the modern architecture. So that, I wrote. I mean, he's quite right; I wrote that. But I thought not as narrowly as he criticized it. But he's quite right. So, at least in that respect, I did something similar. Perhaps not as outspoken as Pevsner later did it or Giedion.

SMITH: Can you remember the name of your critic?

HERRMANN: Mann. I couldn't give you his Christian name. [Albert Mann] He is a man, a very good historian, who wrote a book on Romanic architecture in Germany [Die Neuromanik: eine rheinische Komponente im Historismus des 19. Jahrhunderts].

SMITH: But certainly by the time you wrote that article, you felt it was incorrect to see the Boullée or Ledoux as



"pioneers," quote, unquote, of modern architecture?

HERRMANN: I-- No. But I didn't draw-- I mean, I've now read the article.

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: I didn't draw that conclusion. Not at all.

SMITH: No. You don't draw that--

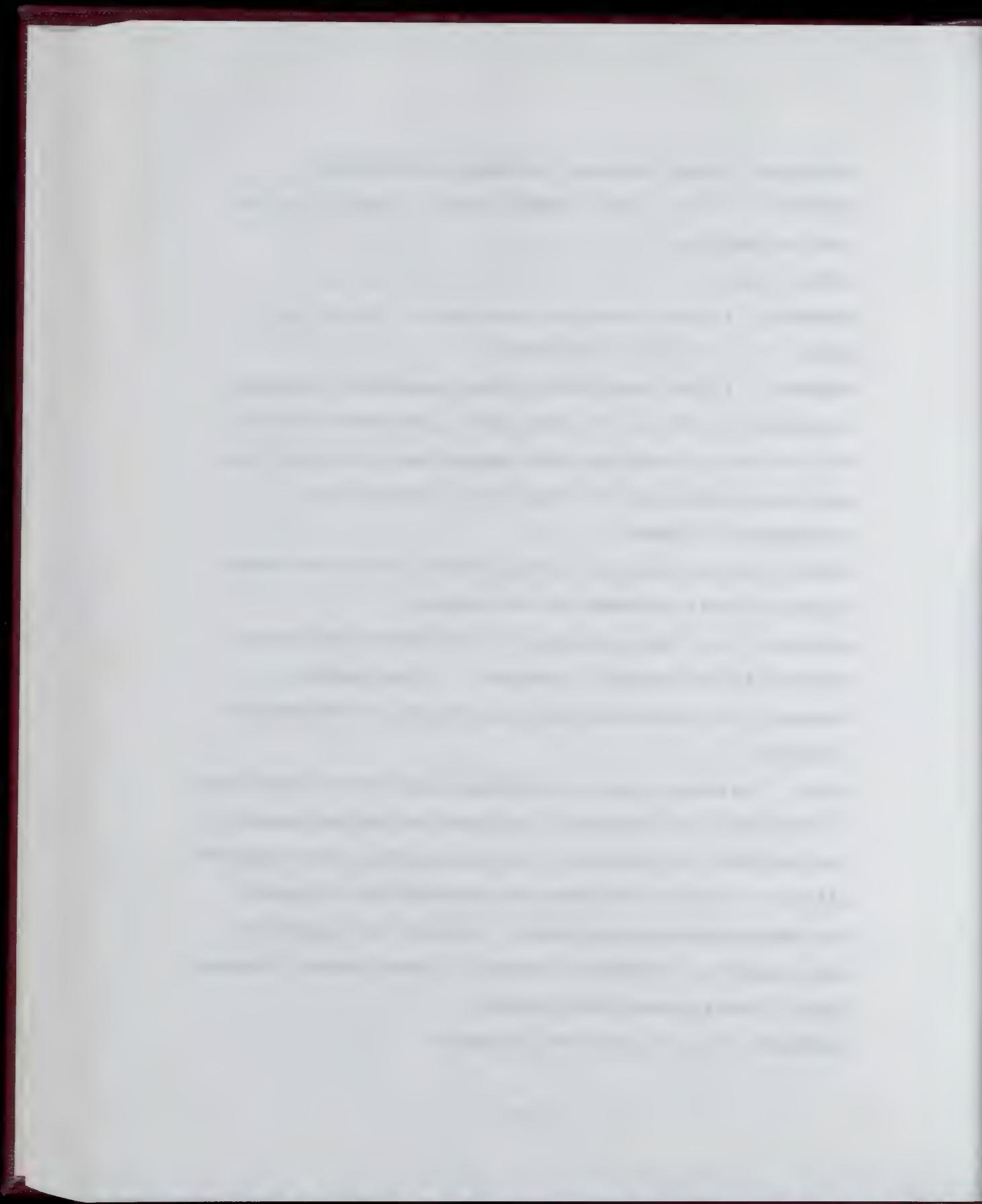
HERRMANN: I just state that he was supposed to have done something in 1780 or '90 which really goes back to 1770. But I'm very pleased that some people took it to draw some conclusion, which may be wrong, but it cleared the development of Ledoux.

SMITH: Did you have any correspondence with either Helen Rosenau or Emil Kaufmann on this subject?

HERRMANN: No. Helen Rosenau-- I had talked with Helen Rosenau, but in another connection. It was mainly, I remember, [in connection] with an article on the temple of Jerusalem.

SMITH: Certainly, one of the things that Watkin points out is that your work seems to-- At least the way he argues it, you were part of a movement that was breaking neoclassicism off from the modern movement and reconnecting it back to the Renaissance-baroque system. I think that's what he sees happening. Were you thinking in those terms? Perhaps beyond Ledoux, going on to Laugier.

HERRMANN: No. You must say it again.



SMITH: Okay. No problem. Of course this is, I think, one of the things that Watkin was arguing, in general, because of his particular aesthetic biases, but that you were part of a group of scholars independently severing neoclassicism from the modern movement and, in effect, reconnecting neoclassicism to the Renaissance-baroque system.

HERRMANN: Yes. I see.

SMITH: But when you mention Laugier, you always talk about his as the moment when we can see something new developing. So do you see in Laugier the birth of the modern conception?

HERRMANN: Not modern. It depends what you call-- But you understand, I'm not modern. If you understand modern today or twenties, when I taught, or thirties, when-- Whatever. Then, no. But if he, Laugier, felt he took a modern point of view, yes. He broke with something which went before. When he-- In the very insignificant attempts he made to design something, and only has his prescription, that is not modern at all.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: But my book, and what I said, or what I would stand for, is what he thought and what he wrote, which is different from what he may have liked in pictures and what he designed. And so that difference is not only Laugier's, but almost every artist. There is always a discrepancy



between what they say and what they do. And so, modern?

NO.

SMITH: But do you see in Laugier the end of the Renaissance-baroque system?

HERRMANN: Yes. Yes.

SMITH: Does that end lie in the way you pose it between his personal taste and then the need to find a rational justification for that personal taste? In Laugier, the two appear to be more clearly separable. One can see that the rational justification is a facade for the personal taste. Is that part of the end of the Renaissance-baroque system? The fact that it is personal taste and not a working out of supposedly objective rules becomes clearer? Do you follow my question?

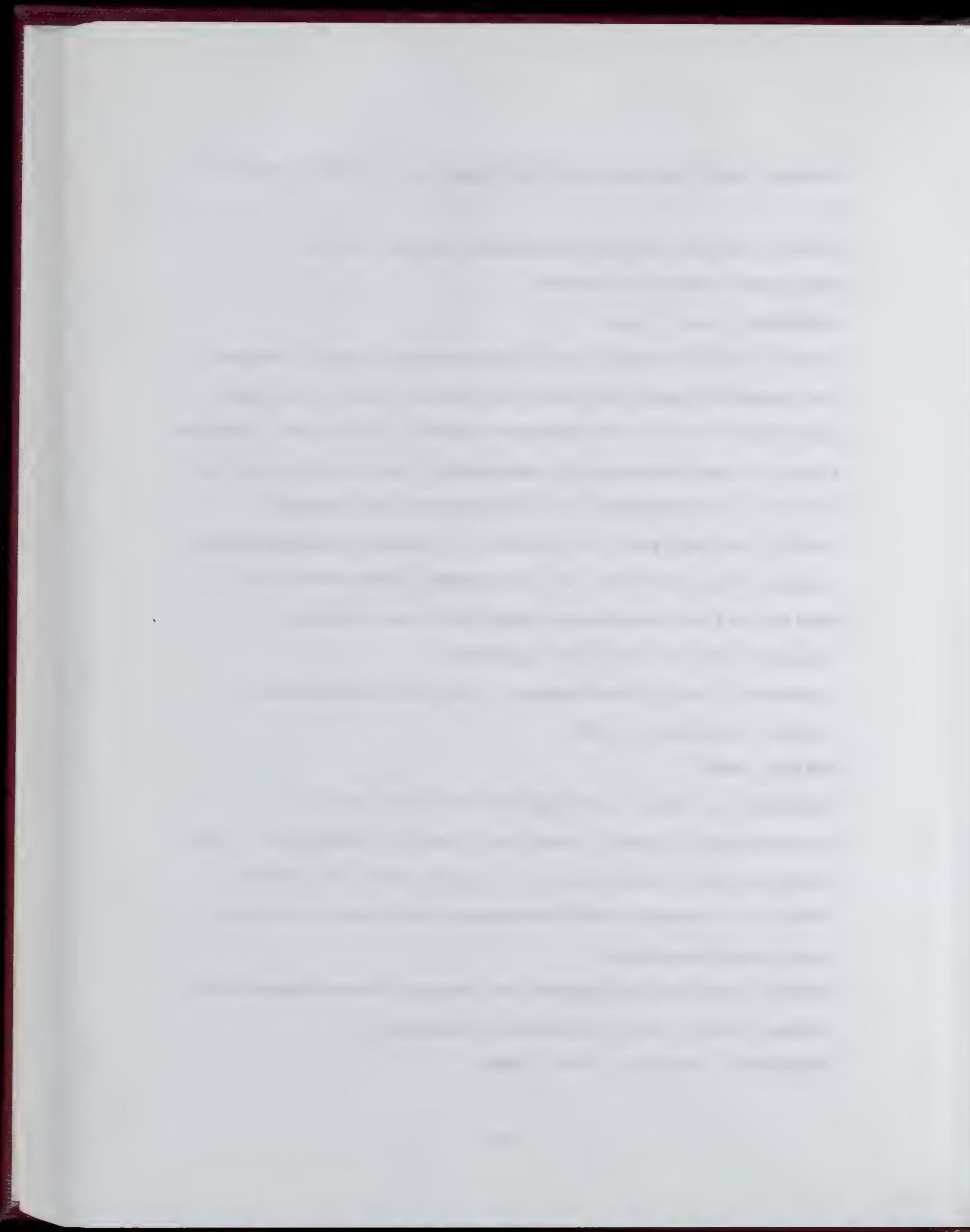
HERRMANN: Yeah. Renaissance. The word Renaissance, I think, involves too much.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: I think he broke with baroque, yes. Renaissance, it wasn't even very clear at that time. It's clear now and clear later on. But he was-- He knew he broke with baroque, and he was sure what he put in its place meant progress.

SMITH: What did you assess the driving force behind that change to be? Was it primarily ideology?

HERRMANN: Ideology. Yes. Yes.



SMITH: Well, we need to discuss the book in greater detail. But actually, before we leave the Ledoux article, at the time that it was written and published, were you aware that anybody considered it to be controversial? Revolutionary?

HERRMANN: No. No. Not until this morning, I didn't think. I must have read that when I had the book. Of course, I read what he said about me, but it didn't strike me. Reading it [the article] again, it has more substance than I thought it had. I never was very fond of that article. So that it has this effect is quite-- I never thought of it.

SMITH: This was also published in Art Bulletin. Was this submitted through Wittkower again? I mean, did you submit this to Wittkower and then he arranged its publication?

HERRMANN: Well, I don't remember whether he did it or-- By that time I knew [James S.] Ackerman. Wittkower recommended Ackerman. Ackerman at one time came to Paris, and we talked about the Desgodets ["Antoine Desgodets and the Académie Royale d'Architecture," Art Bulletin (1958)]. And when I had finished that paper, I probably sent it to Ackerman or whoever was editor then of the Art Bulletin. I don't think it was Rudi [Wittkower].

SMITH: Okay. However, at the time that it was published, there was beginning to be the first movement towards the



reevaluation of the orthodox interpretation of modernism. And I'm thinking an important part of that was the publication of Reyner Banham's Theory and Design in the First Machine Age. Did you know Reyner Banham?

HERRMANN: I met him once, yes. But not knowing--

SMITH: I mean, he had been a student of Rudi Wittkower's and apparently felt that his book was very much an attempt to apply a Wittkowerian analysis to architecture to find the symbolic meaning in buildings. At that time, when you were writing this, were you involved in discussions about the correct interpretation of modernism?

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: No?

HERRMANN: No. I-- No. Simply no.

SMITH: Okay. [laughter]

HERRMANN: After that, I already knew that-- I had a book on Perrault [The Theory of Claude Perrault]; I worked on Perrault. And-- No.

SMITH: No.

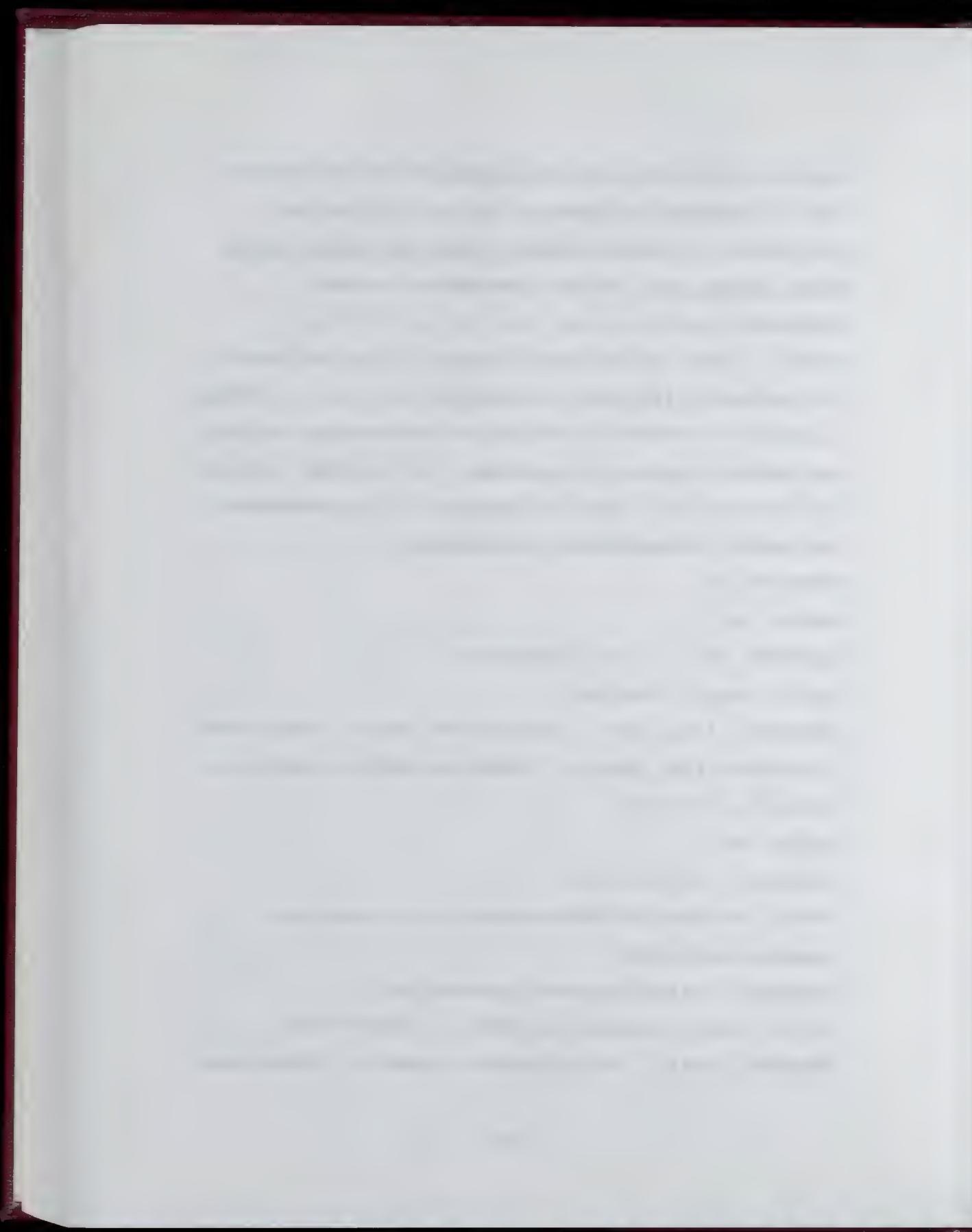
HERRMANN: Not generally.

SMITH: So were you interested at all in questions regarding modernism?

HERRMANN: What do you mean by modernism?

SMITH: Well, the modern movement in architecture.

HERRMANN: Well, I was interested, vaguely. I think more



strongly in the last ten, twenty years. Afterwards. But I don't quite know-- Part of it is--but that may be not at the beginning--that friendship with Leon Krier, who is a modern architect who is in the middle of antimodernism and is very involved in neoclassical ideas and classical dogma and is one of the people who-- And who, unfortunately, wrote a book on [Albert] Speer, and he defended against outcries that whether a man is politically a Nazi or fascist, but a good architect, has nothing to do with each other. So on this I had a long discussion, because I was opposing that view. That brought me into it, but I think it started already earlier. But that I've known now for ten years or so.

SMITH: So at the time you were working on your Laugier project, as you were drafting it, were you considering the question of how Laugier relates to the modern movement?

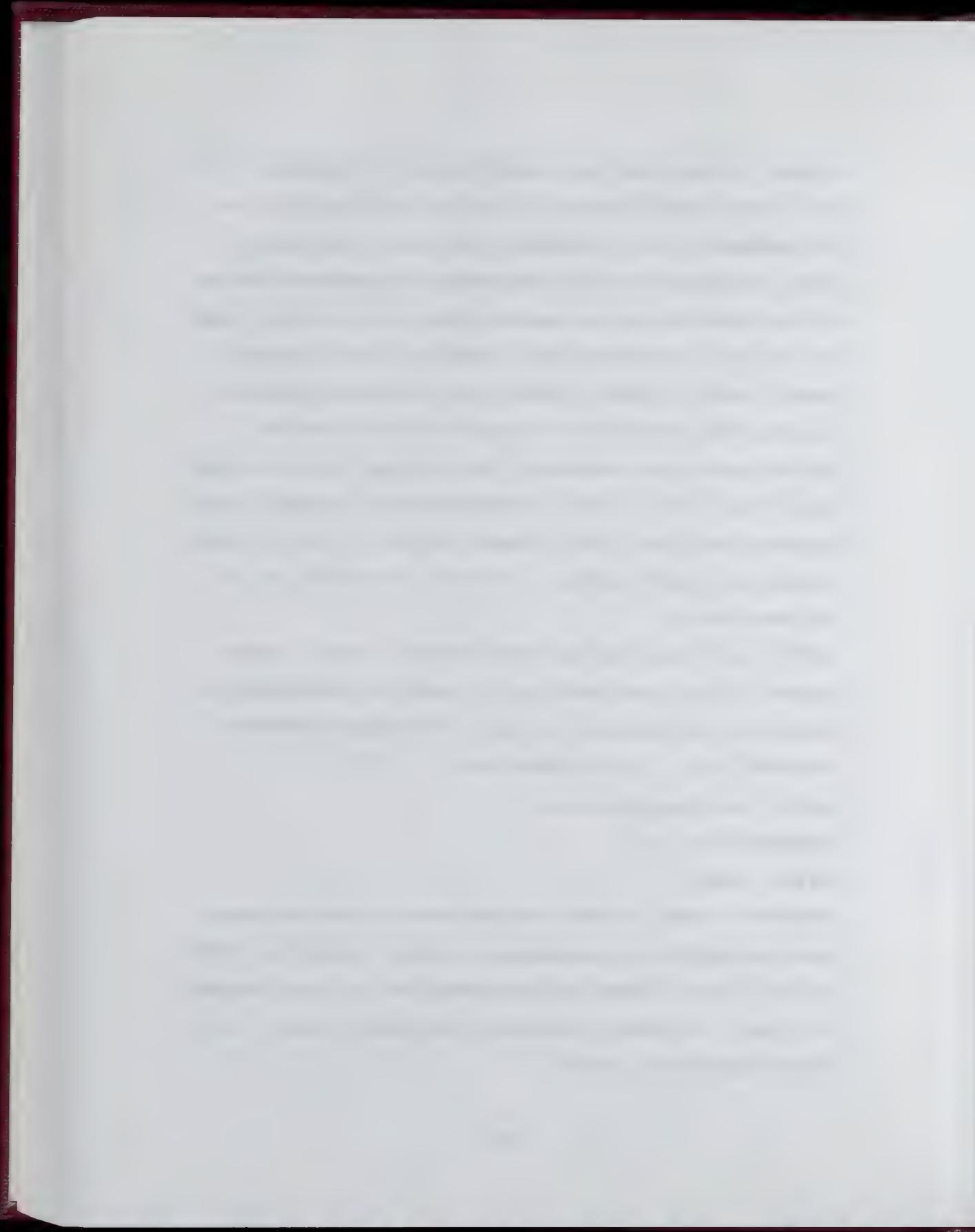
HERRMANN: No. I don't think of--

SMITH: Not even obliquely?

HERRMANN: No. No.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: Today, it would be different, so far different that for anything he propagates, Laugier propagates, there are now a whole number of architects who very much support that view. But when I wrote it, that didn't exist. No, I didn't relate them at all.



SMITH: I'm not sure I quite understand the last thing you just said. Could you go into a little more detail?

HERRMANN: You asked me if when I worked or wrote on Laugier, did I connect him or relate him in some way to modern architecture. And I said no.

SMITH: And you said it was because--

HERRMANN: Today it would be-- At that time, I thought it was not-- Well, I only could do it if I thought that the next step is Boullée and Ledoux and the revolutionary architect and they are somehow related to modern architecture. But I denied any connection going that way. I worked on Laugier and only finished the book to show that his ideas are still carried on right through the neoclassical period, and then even in modern times. But these were his ideas. Unrelated to what has been built.

SMITH: There was something you had said, that today, if you were writing the book, there would be architects who would be interested.

HERRMANN: Yes. They would be more interested, because the question of classical architecture, whether classical or modern, is age-old, discussed by generation after generation. It has become very lively again. And there is a whole circle of architects who go back to the order and columns, etc., etc.

SMITH: Right.



HERRMANN: So today, it would. I'm sure that during the last forty years since Laugier was published, it was read by younger generations. And I know from the response that I had that many of them found some confirmation of their conception of architecture in the book. But I didn't write it to--

SMITH: Can you tell me who some of these younger architects are?

HERRMANN: Not offhand. I've got letters from quite a number who always read--



TAPE NUMBER: VI, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

SMITH: You said the Laugier has come out as a paperback.

HERRMANN: A paperback. And then the translation from the French, I did together with Anni [Marx Herrmann].

SMITH: The translation that you did of Laugier from the French to English.

HERRMANN: To English. And with a preface giving a rough idea of Laugier. That is being sold in America especially, probably to young architects, too.

SMITH: When you wrote the book, what kind of conception did you have of who the reader would be?

HERRMANN: Who the readers were? They were art historians, young art historians, the people who worked round about that time. Many of them came. Sometimes they came here and saw me, and we talked about it. But the problem was that by the time that happened, I had been away from Laugier, I was away from Perrault. I was in a century which they weren't interested in. They were interested in neoclassical, and I had done with it. And so they came and wrote, but I couldn't help them.

SMITH: One thing we haven't really discussed is before you began your work on Laugier, what kind of prior background did you have in that general subject area of neoclassicism?

HERRMANN: Nothing, really.



SMITH: Nothing.

HERRMANN: Except very generally in university. And later on, I knew a bit about neoclassical. Now, that goes back to Germany and before I was interested in modern architecture.

SMITH: Again, you begin your book [Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts] with Gilly.

HERRMANN: Well, the twenties.

SMITH: Yeah. In terms of the Laugier book, how did you see it fitting in with the previously existing literature? I know there is no other book on Laugier, but other literature on eighteenth-century French architecture or architectural theory.

HERRMANN: There weren't many books on that theory. I mean, [Louis] Hautecoeur. But it was a different kind of book. As I said before, Robin Middleton, at the same time, wrote very close to Laugier. But that was just before. But all the other books were mainly on architects and their buildings. The theory--

SMITH: Now, you were fairly well along with the book when Wittkower and Blunt decided to include it in the [Desmond] Zwemmer series. But were there requirements that you needed to concern yourself about that grew out of the series that it was being published in?



HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: No?

HERRMANN: I had no say. Every author was free. No. I don't-- Well, it had to fit somehow in the series, but not in any-- They didn't impose anything. Perhaps the length of the book.

SMITH: Did you see any important difference between the art and architecture series Pevsner was doing for Pelican [Press] and the series that Wittkower and Blunt were doing for Zwemmer?

HERRMANN: I don't know that Wittkower-- What is it? I'm ignorant.

SMITH: No, the series that the Laugier book was published in was the series--

HERRMANN: And was different from the Pelican?

SMITH: Yeah. I mean--

HERRMANN: Oh, yes. Greatly different.

SMITH: How so?

HERRMANN: Well, it is mainly the Zwemmer series-- They were monographs. Mine was on Laugier, and then there were other monographs on architects and their buildings. The Pelican series is a whole book on the whole period of--

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: You can't really compare it.

SMITH: Okay. Do you think there were different historio-



graphical philosophies at work?

HERRMANN: I'm not sure. This Zwemmer series I don't see as a definite kind. Probably the relation to social effects, to outcome, may go through other books, but I don't know. At the moment, I can't think of what books there were.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: No, I can't.

SMITH: When you decided to go back into art history, did you consider teaching at all?

HERRMANN: No. No.

SMITH: Had you wanted to teach?

HERRMANN: No. I didn't. Well, I didn't have the connection, but also not the inclination to go into teaching and hardly went into lecturing. On and off, I did, but I'm not very good at it. I can't lecture freely. And so it is much more of an effort for me than it should be and would be for somebody who is a natural teacher or lecturer. So, apart from the fact that I didn't have the connections to any institution, I didn't even want to. And I don't think it's sour grapes that I really didn't want to.

SMITH: Did you attend seminars at all? Did you begin to involve yourself in any of the collective--?

HERRMANN: If you talk of the second half of my



professional life, I'm a loner.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: All the way through.

SMITH: All the way through. Well, that's one of the things we need to clarify.

HERRMANN: Yeah. So there you will continuously get negative answers. I meet people occasionally, but I am not enough involved in general art history except for whatever I'm working on.

SMITH: Okay. Well, then, let's discuss the Laugier book somewhat. The first question, the most obvious question, would be why did you decided not to simply write a biography.

HERRMANN: On Laugier?

SMITH: On Laugier, yeah.

HERRMANN: Well, I didn't know anything about Laugier except that book. And then it came while I was doing research. Of course, I tried to find out a bit about the man, and I did find out, but not enough to write a biography. It would be very thin. And the man did interest me when I worked on his ideas and on the whole time, his contemporaries' past and future development. Of course, I took an interest in him. But my main interest was his theory: How did it develop? Where are the roots? And where are the ends? Etc. That interests me.



Tracing the root led me far back. And also, somewhere in the future where it ends. And, of course, the man got into it. I wish I would know a bit more, but I have a fair knowledge of what he was like. That was the easiest part of writing the book, was the biography and to find things. That was the greatest fun. And, from time to time, I did fine.

SMITH: One of the points that you make that seems quite important was that, by dating the publication of Laugier's book [*Essai sur l'architecture*] with the publication of Le Roy's drawings of the Acropolis and the excavation of Herculaneum, you argue that the neoclassical revival did not grow out of the archaeological discovery of the ancient Greek ruins or archaeological study of ancient Greece, the rediscovery of Greek temples. At that time, when you were writing, was that something that was in debate? Or were people habitually considering neoclassicism to be a response to the archaeological--?

HERRMANN: No, no. That must have been known before, that the temple in Sicily fairly late, in essence-- No. The impact of the original is much later, and that must have been known. That is not mine.

SMITH: But you do underscore this point. It seems to be an important one you are making. And it seems to be important for your general thrust. Why was that particular



point so important to you? To separate the ideology of neoclassicism from the archaeology of ancient Greece?

HERRMANN: It's an interesting question. I can't answer it. I must think about it.

SMITH: Well, we can come back to it.

HERRMANN: Why that is important. I mean, it's so difficult for me to answer because I don't know what I said. You ask me about a book which I don't remember in detail. And the fact that in Greece, the originals were discovered comparatively late, that people went to Rome, but comparatively late to Athens-- That made a great impact. That influenced the whole development round about the turn of the century, plus/minus, and goes back into the eighties. That I know. But I don't know what I said at the time.

SMITH: Well, it's a fairly simple point that you're making. The point that Laugier's aesthetics and the aesthetics of neoclassicism were not derived from looking at the Greek temples, no matter what they said about Greek beauty being closer to the original, the primitive hut, and therefore more perfect.

HERRMANN: Yes. It's certainly true that the Greek architecture, as such, is later and probably long after Laugier's essay was written.

SMITH: And then you make the point that in 1758 was the



publication of Le Roy's drawings of the Acropolis and that this served to confirm Laugier. I guess what I am asking is, why was it important for you to see neoclassicism as an intellectual movement based on personal taste? That seems to be very important in terms of the way you were structuring the book.

HERRMANN: It was. I mean, yes. It was certainly a taste, but not just an accidental taste.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: I mean, it was at the time that somebody like Laugier had that taste. And then he rationalized it with the hut, and not referring to actual buildings.

SMITH: The other thing that you seemed to be stressing was that Laugier was not the source of his ideas, but-- Well, he was certainly the source of some of his ideas, but he was gathering together and expressing in the clearest form ideas that were percolating in society at the time.

HERRMANN: Yes. Well, as I've probably said somewhere, he had the luck or the perception to write a book at the right time. If he would have written-- Cordemoy may have had very similar ideas, but he didn't put them so clearly, and not at that time. If Laugier would have waited another ten years, the book would have come under many other books.

SMITH: Yes. Okay. Does that match your general conception of how ideas work in terms of how--?



HERRMANN: I think yes. That's a question of belief. I mean, I believe that is very much so. You just feel that this should be said now, that the time is right to say it. And you gather it, you don't know from where. It just is in the air.

SMITH: Yeah. So the model that you used to describe Laugier and his relationship to his sources and his public, you would feel would apply today, or applies equally in the twentieth century to--

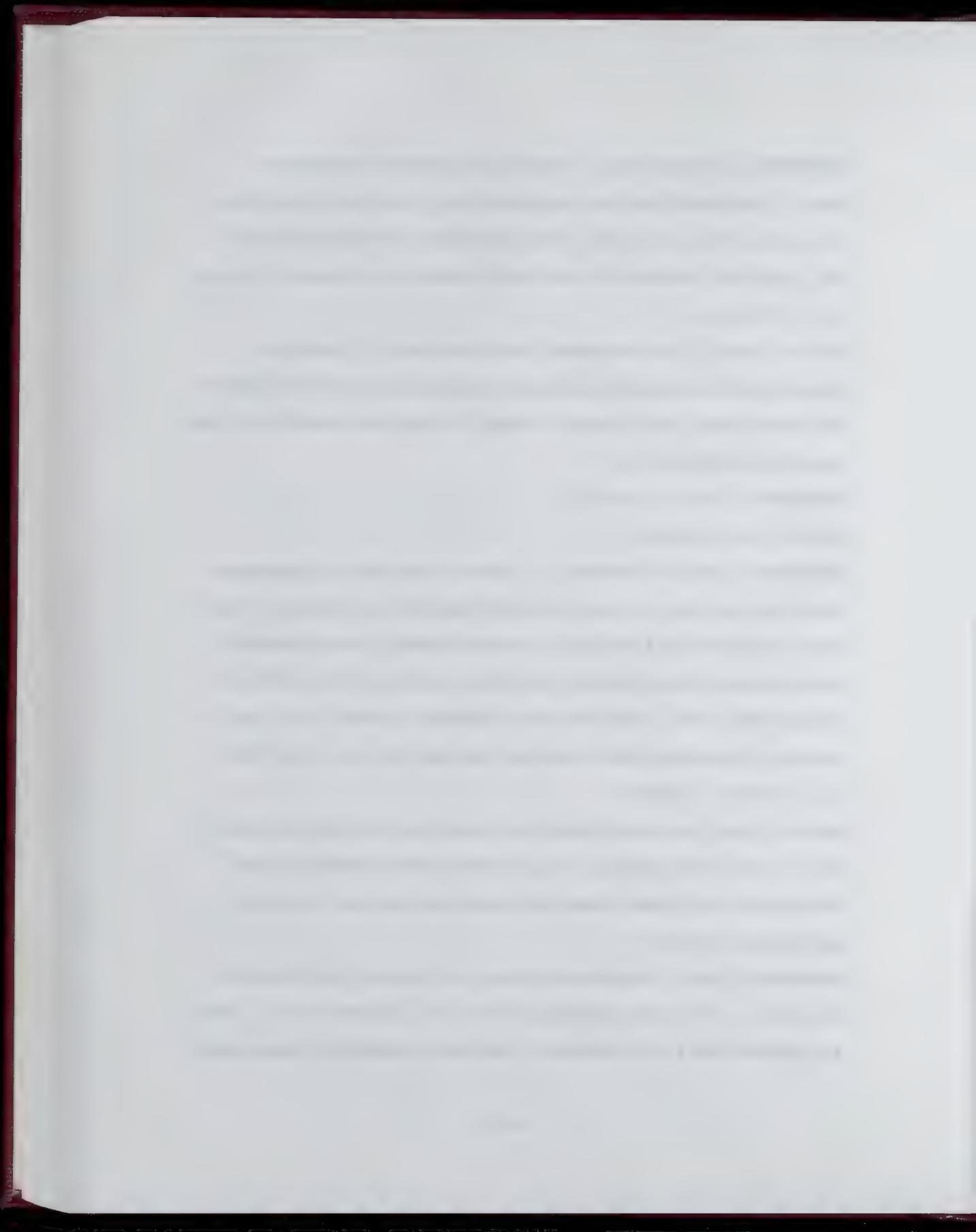
HERRMANN: Yes, it could.

SMITH: As a model.

HERRMANN: Yes, of course. I think that that's probably-- When you go into it, books which had made an impact, they must have been written at a certain time. They couldn't have been written before, and they wouldn't have made an impact too late. And that has nothing to do-- It's, of course, the author who had the feeling for it. And that is, I think, Laugier.

SMITH: Now, you said that the ideas are in the air, you don't know from where. Do you think the historian can determine how those ideas got into the air and where a particular writer--?

HERRMANN: Yes. You can do that, of course, but you kill the book. It's the boring part of it, if you do it. And you should do it, of course. But you shouldn't lose sight



that the book was written then without knowing where the sources were.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: But as an historian, of course, you have to try and find where they come from. And then it still remains that Laugier just had the feeling for what needed to be said. And he himself forgets about it. I mean, the book is written, and it made quite an impression. And he sets off, and what he writes is quite interesting, but nothing like the essay.

SMITH: In the book you do make a distinction between what was original in Laugier's thought and what was not original. Which did you think was most important in terms of the success of the book? The original aspect?

HERRMANN: Yes, yes.

SMITH: Yeah. Okay.

HERRMANN: I'm sure it ought to be.

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: I mean, what is original probably hadn't been said before.

SMITH: Towards the end, you have a quote that I noted down. It's a quote from you that I'd like to-- You say, quote, "It is the program of taste that makes the book important, not the theory it contains," end quote. Could you elaborate on that a little bit? I mean, why you felt



you needed to make the distinction between the program versus the theory. Maybe it's an unfair question after thirty years.

HERRMANN: Well, he is quite dictatorial. That is the program part.

SMITH: Yes. Another thing I wanted to ask you. It relates to scholarship that was taking place at Cambridge University in philosophy and history in the fifties and sixties, the work of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock, and [John R.] Searle, who were looking at the use of language to look at the development of discourses in intellectual traditions. Were you familiar with that work at all?

HERRMANN: No.

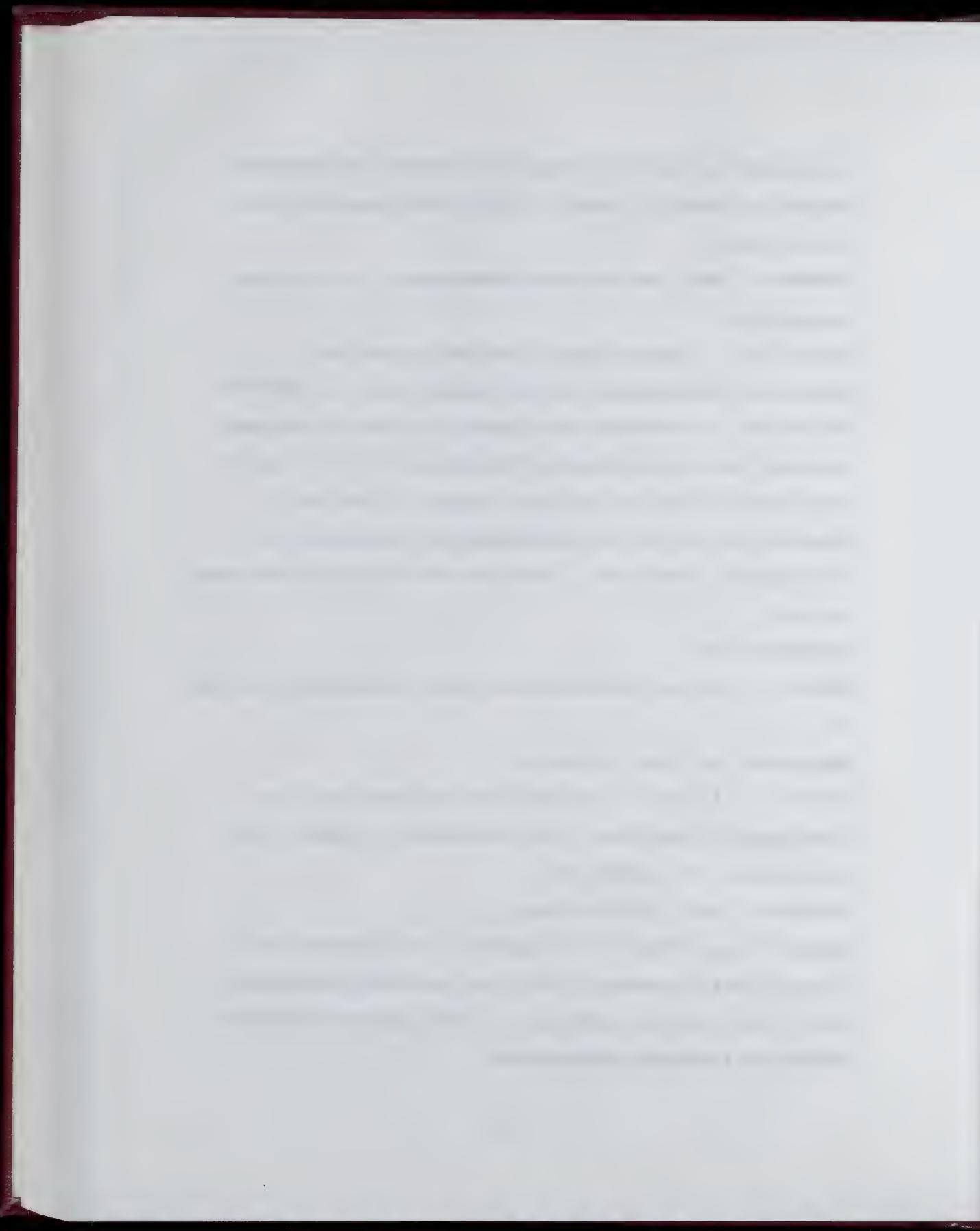
SMITH: I saw some similarities. Your methodology reminded me--

HERRMANN: No. No, I'm sorry.

SMITH: --of some of the work that was being done in Cambridge by historians. But you weren't-- There's no connection. No connection.

HERRMANN: Well, I don't know.

SMITH: Okay. Kind of a linguistic-- An approach to history that's based on looking at how words are being used. And that was quite new at that time and has since become an important methodology.



Okay, what led you to move on to Claude Perrault as your next subject?

HERRMANN: Going back before Laugier to the seventeenth century, I got to Perrault and collected already material and knew I wanted to write on Perrault. And had certain attitudes, certain ideas, which were not then usual perceptions of Perrault's book [Ordonnance des cinq espèces de Colonnes]. And that, I thought I wanted to write about. That he was perceived, he was taken, to be a modern man who thought of the relativity of things, and I thought that that was a wrong analysis, a wrong interpretation that doesn't agree with the text. And in the book [The Theory of Claude Perrault], I show that he was wrongly interpreted. That was the main reason why I thought it was worth writing about Perrault. And then I found, also, that he is, right from the beginning, being taken as an architect and that, strictly speaking, he wasn't an architect. And there, I remember when I really had finished the book, and it's when I must have had the manuscript, or Blunt certainly had the manuscript, then Blunt came to me once and suggested, "Don't you think it's better to add a chapter on Perrault as an architect?" And I said, "I'm sorry, no. [laughter] Because the main reason that I wrote the book was that I don't believe he was an architect." [laughter] And then Blunt said, "Okay,



okay. All right."

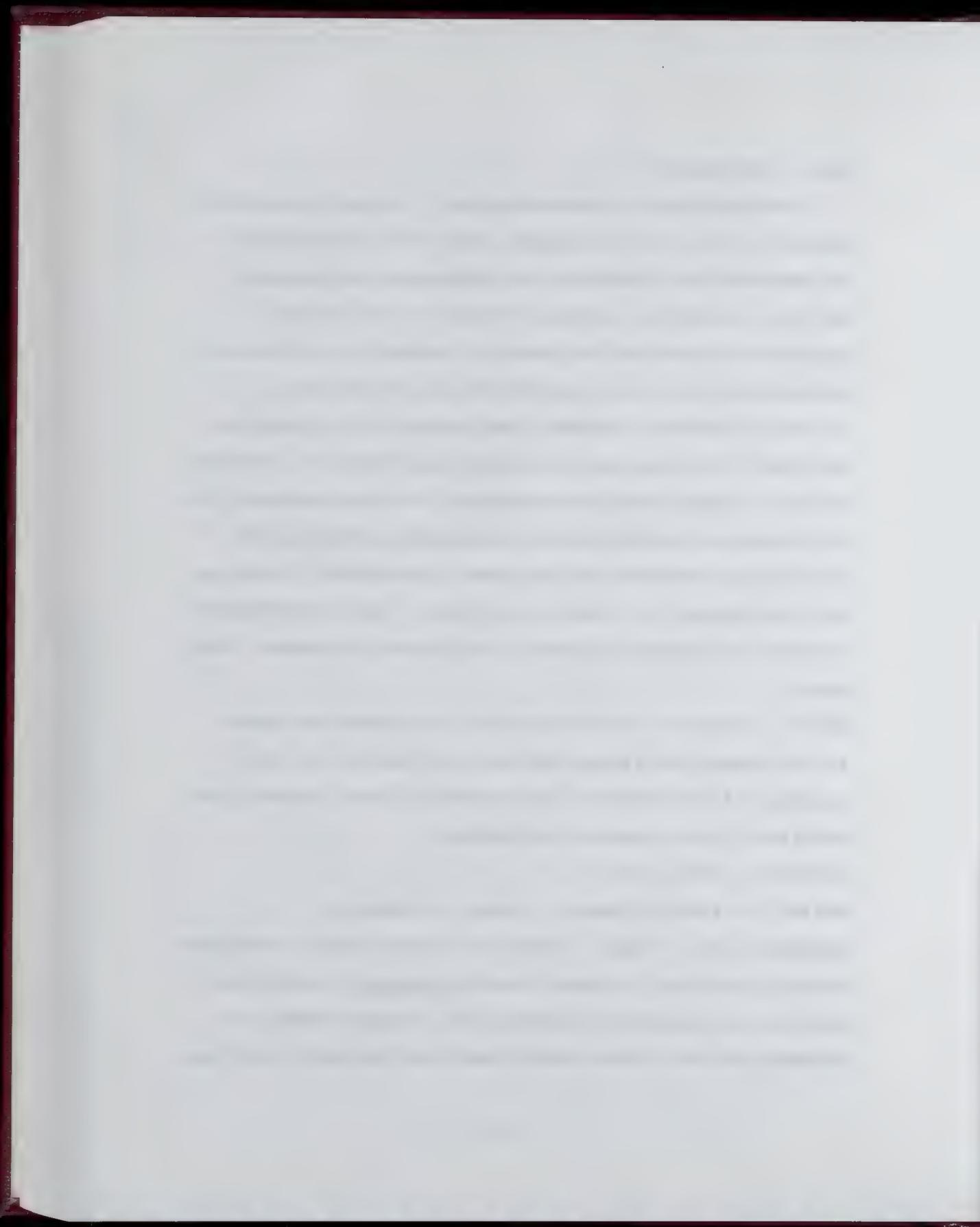
Perrault was an interesting man. He was a scientist; he was a first-class biologist. And that interested me. I collected a lot of material on this aspect of Perrault. But when it came to writing, I found I'm not quite qualified to write on the value of Perrault as a biologist and medical man. So I just cut it out, which was a difficult decision, because I had quite a lot of material for that. But that also intrigued me on Perrault, that he was only a very short time concerned with architecture. He did design and became famous, but really, actually, he never was an architect as you take an architect. They not only can design, but know how to build. And, nevertheless, he built the Louvre colonnade, and it made him famous, his name.

SMITH: I find it interesting that, for these two books, you've chosen two figures who were influential on the practice of architecture, but neither of whom is really an architect. Both Laugier and Perrault.

HERRMANN: Yeah, yeah.

SMITH: Is there a reason? I mean, is that--?

HERRMANN: No. I mean, I think the reason that I wrote the Perrault was that in order to write Laugier, I had to go back to the seventeenth century, so, amongst others, to Blondel and many other people, and also Perrault. And then



that he wrote a treatise, his own theoretical treatise, not of the quality of Laugier--quite different--but very much more debated about. He raised more problems. But that, I think, took me. But then, that he was not an architect, that came later, when I went into his life. And I also found some relation of his ideas which stem from his work as a scientist. So that was interesting.

SMITH: Yes. That comes in towards the end of the book, in particular.

HERRMANN: But actually, it was the fact that in the seventeenth century, as a writer on theory, he was a most interesting and controversial man. And I finished with it. I thought, "Now I must go to the nineteenth century. I finished the eighteenth, seventeenth. Now all that's left is the nineteenth."

SMITH: But you could have gone into the sixteenth century.

HERRMANN: I could, but that was-- Several reasons. I think it's too far away from modern times. And then it would have included-- I would have to read Italian. Well, anyhow, if we are on that, I didn't know-- When Perrault was finished, that was that, and I was without work.

SMITH: Could we get the dates when you began the Perrault book and progress?

HERRMANN: Well, I must have soon finished after the-- When was Laugier?



SMITH: Laugier was published in 1962.

HERRMANN: 'Sixty-two. I will look it up again. I think it was '63 or so when I-- But I will look it up. We went to Switzerland for winter sport, and on the way back, I decided to stop in Zürich, because, by that time, I had already thought-- I wrote about the nineteenth century in 1930 in Germany. And there I wrote a chapter on [Gottfried] Semper, which was not published.

SMITH: Now, this is already in '63, very early, then, if I'm following the chronology. This is right after you finished the Laugier book?

HERRMANN: No. No, after I finished Perrault.

SMITH: Oh, Perrault.

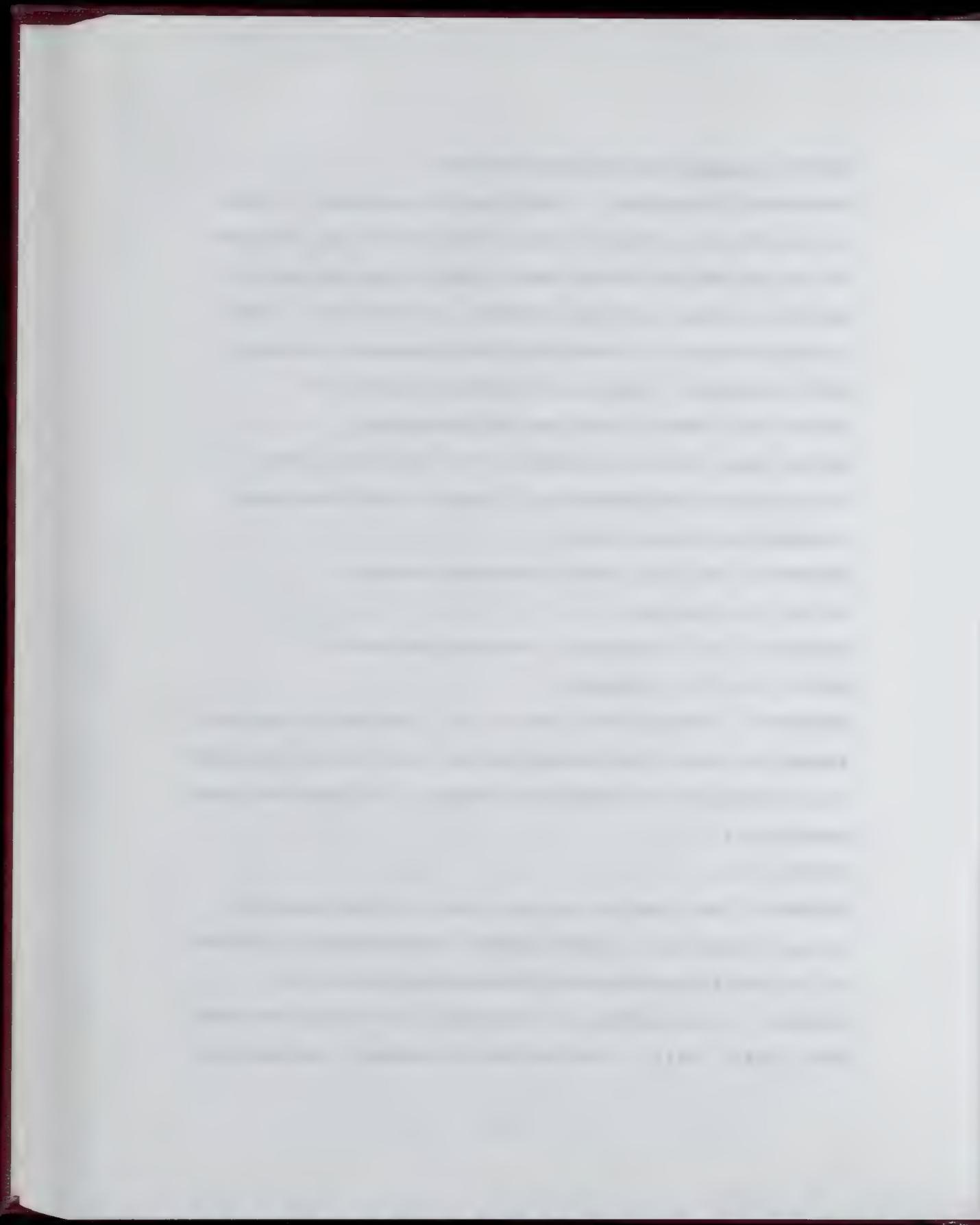
HERRMANN: No. When was--? Perrault was much--

SMITH: In '72, I thought.

HERRMANN: 'Seventy-two. So in '73, I decided to work on Semper, on whom I had worked before. And that is the great theoretician of the nineteenth century. So there was some order in it.

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: So I decided to stop over in Zürich because I thought there must be some papers, some material in Zürich at the ETH [Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Zürich]. I had written to them that I was coming and came, and I said, "Well, I want to work on Semper. Perhaps you



have some paper, some material here." And [Martin] Fröhlich was the man. He opened the cupboard, which was filled with manuscripts, and he said, "Here you are." And that's how I started to work once more on Semper.

SMITH: Now, did you have a commitment from Wittkower and Blunt to publish Perrault when you began working on it?

HERRMANN: Yes. I must have told them. I wrote to them, and they encouraged me, probably. The Laugier had come out, and so they must have encouraged me, because I kept working on it. Then I probably also told them, roughly, what I wanted to say and sent them a chapter or so, and it developed.

SMITH: Blunt was an expert on seventeenth-century French art.

HERRMANN: Yeah, yeah.

SMITH: The Louis XIV period.

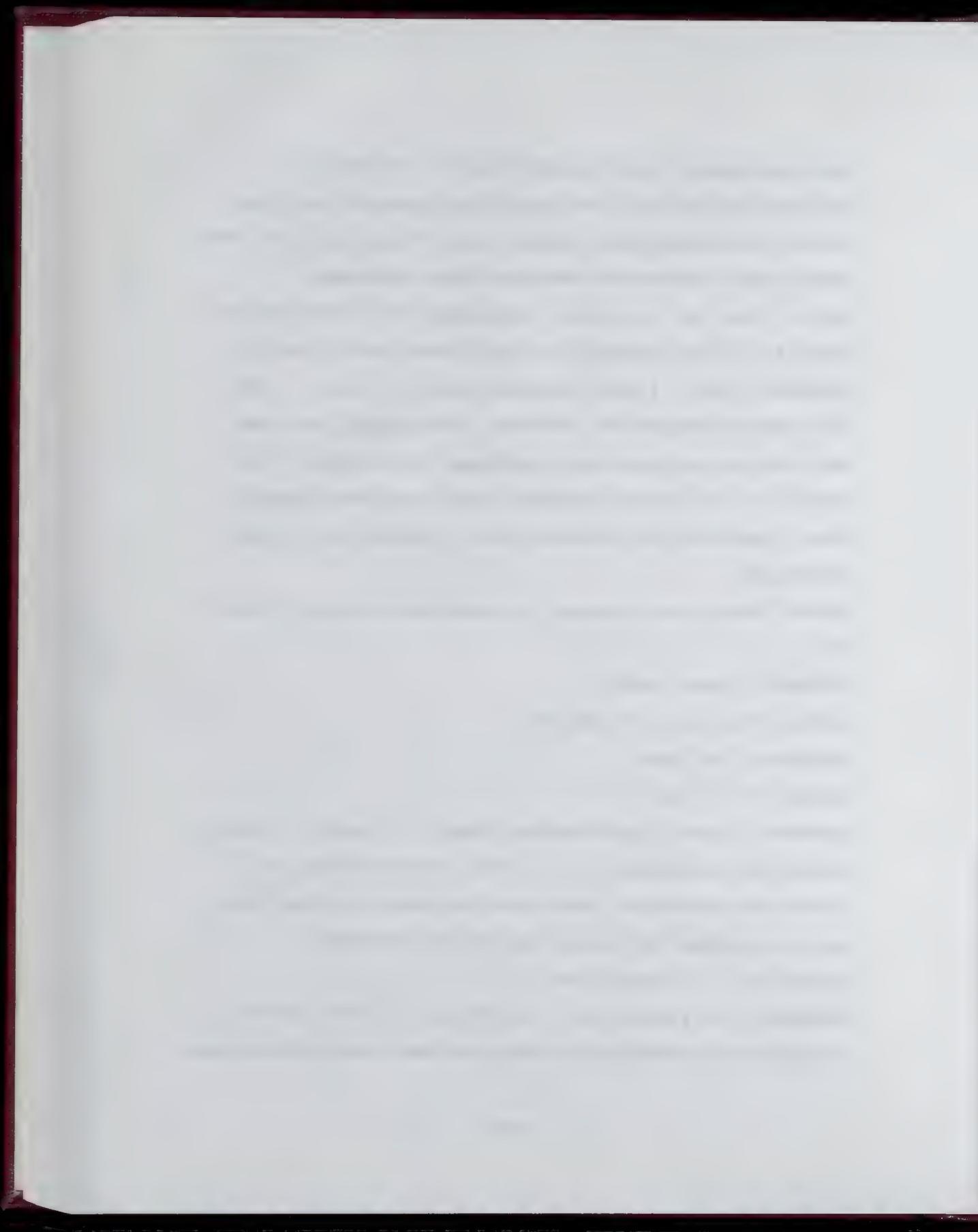
HERRMANN: Oh, yes.

SMITH: Did he have--?

HERRMANN: Less on architecture theory. I mean, not many people are interested in it. They want buildings and people and paintings. And Blunt was great, in that the great advantage for me was that he was bilingual.

SMITH: Oh. In French and--

HERRMANN: In French, yes. His father, I think, was an ambassador or something in Paris for many years when he was



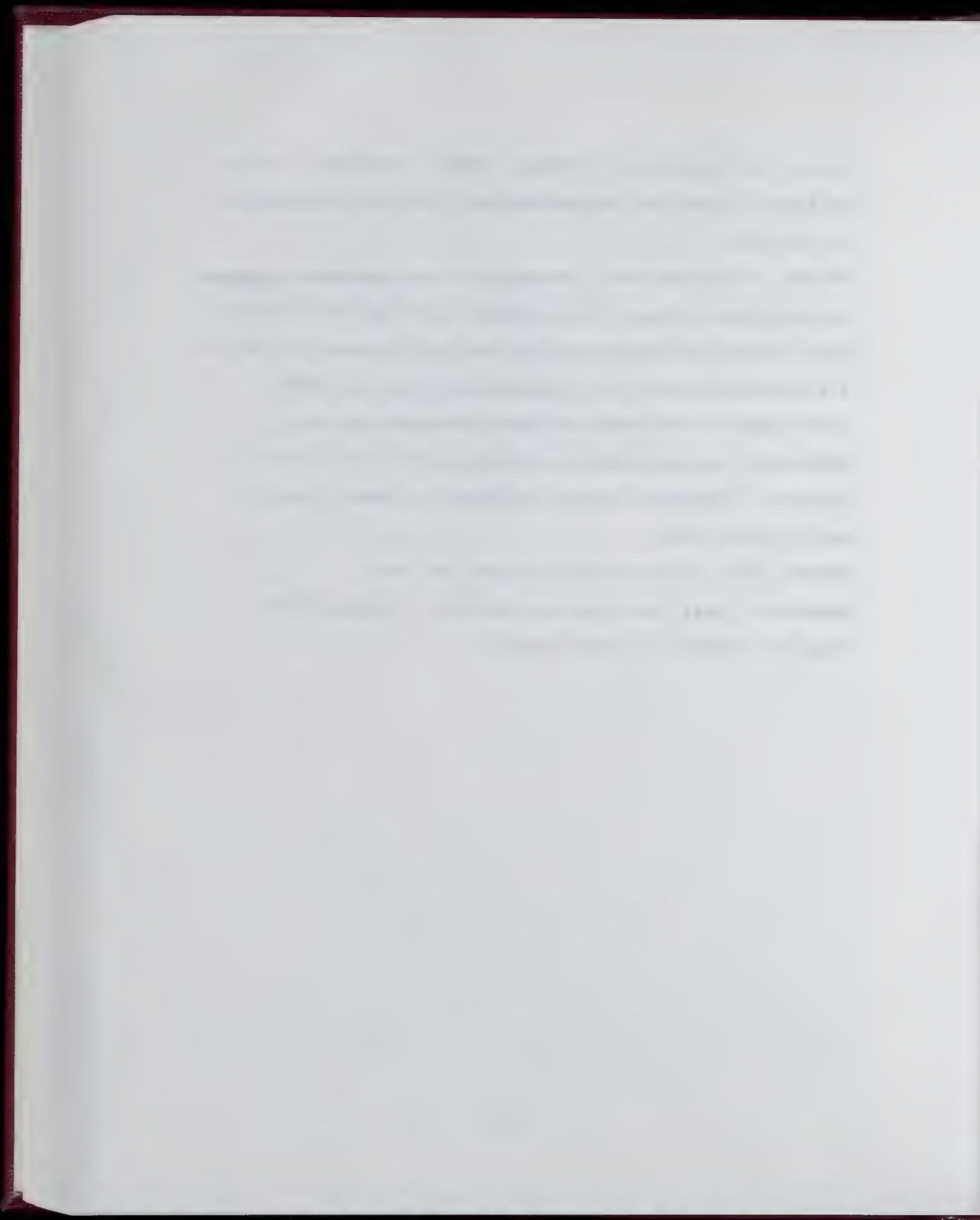
a boy. So he grew up in Paris. When I knew him, he was bilingual. And that was marvelous. All the translations in the book.

SMITH: I noticed--well, actually it was regarding Laugier--in one of his letters to you Blunt indicated that he had gone through and rewritten some of your passages to put in a stylistic polish. Did you have any feelings about that? Was it fine with you that he would rewrite?

HERRMANN: He corrected or rewrote quite a lot. And whenever I repeated myself, he pulled me back. He did quite a lot, yes.

SMITH: Many writers would be upset at the--

HERRMANN: Well, as a writer who doesn't command the English language, I would never--



TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

SMITH: Well, continuing with [Anthony] Blunt, since he was more knowledgeable about the Louis XIV period, with the Perrault book [The Theory of Claude Perrault], did he have more definite opinions about what he felt needed to be included? Or--

HERRMANN: Well, the one thing I mentioned-- He thought that I don't talk about his buildings was a fault. And, otherwise, I don't remember. I know and remember that he worked this over, the manuscript over. Whether I objected to this or that, it's quite possible, but I have no recollection of a great debate on something.

SMITH: I was wondering if he might have disagreed at some point with, perhaps, an interpretation you were making.

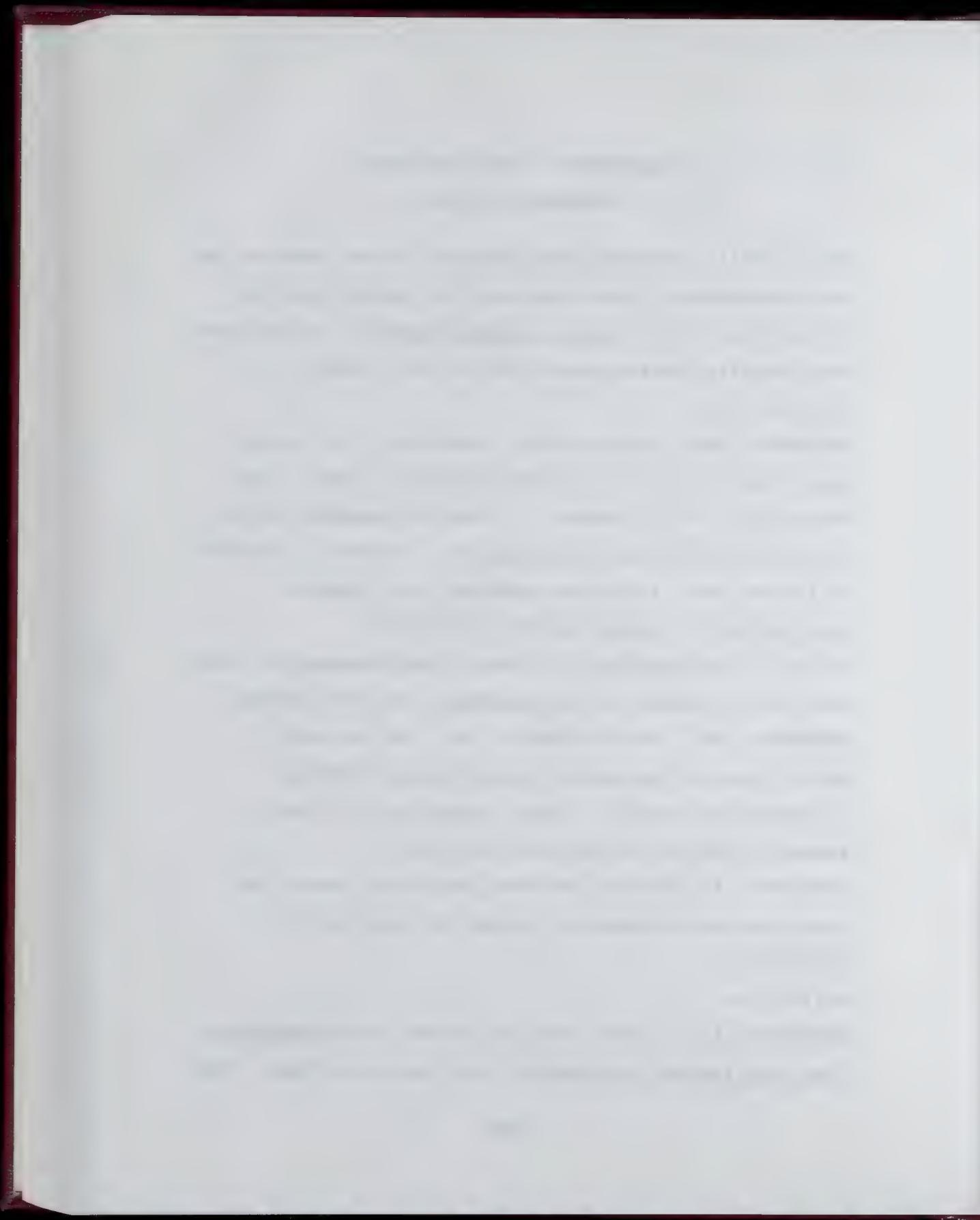
HERRMANN: No, I don't think so. No. No, he didn't.

SMITH: How did you assess the previously existing literature on Perrault? Again, there wasn't a book on Perrault, but how did you view your book--?

HERRMANN: Its relation to other people who wrote? And there are quite a number of people who wrote about Perrault.

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: And on that, they only spoke on the Ordonnance [des cinq espèces de Colonnes], his theoretical book. They



all took a different view. They generally did not accept my view that he was not a radical man who had completely freed everybody of the order, to be subjected to the laws and rules of the order, that he was liberating. That I dispute. Almost all people who wrote about him took a different view. How it is now, what the opinion is, I don't know.

SMITH: With [Gottfried] Semper, again, how did you assess what was going to be the relationship of your work to previously existing work on the subject?

HERRMANN: About Semper and what other people wrote about Semper?

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: Well, you see, I must talk of something else first.

SMITH: That's fine.

HERRMANN: How I got to Semper, then.

SMITH: Okay.

HERRMANN: I mean, I wrote a small chapter in the thirties [in Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts] on Semper and thought he was a very progressive man who renewed the architecture of the time. Then I went to Zürich, as I just said, and there were masses of material.

SMITH: This is in the seventies?

HERRMANN: That's, then, in the seventies. So I sat down



to go through that material, and that was great. A very great labor, a great task to do that. I'm not quite clear, but I think that [Adolf Max] Vogt was director of the GTA [Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur], of the ETH [Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Zürich] department on theory and architecture. He said that they now are going to publish all the drawings they have. That was done by Martin Fröhlich, and that will be done. But that he was worried because there is this enormous mess of manuscript. I said, "Well, I'm quite willing to work on them." And he was relieved that somebody will do it. So then I went to Zürich, together with my wife [Anni Marx Herrmann], and we lived there, at a stretch, several times, for months. And worked in the ETH on these manuscripts. She helped me, and I worked on that.

SMITH: What was Anni's involvement in your work?

HERRMANN: When we worked there?

SMITH: Yes.

HERRMANN: She was my assistant.

SMITH: Had she worked on the Laugier and Perrault books?

HERRMANN: No, no. And she never worked on anything. But this came, and she helped to transcribe, mainly to transcribe or number the manuscript and transcribe the text.

SMITH: I see. Did you receive any kind of a research



grant to help support--?

HERRMANN: They paid me.

SMITH: Oh, they did pay.

HERRMANN: They paid me. No, mostly ETH. And so the aim was to make a catalog of this material, and that took years. Several times to go there and study it, and eventually, they sent me photocopies. And I've got the photocopies here. Almost--not quite, but almost--the complete material which is in Zürich I have in photocopies here. And I could work here on it. Making the catalog was a major task, and that was finally finished. And it may be there, I don't know. I could look it up. Then Semper, as a man, came out, and what happened to him. And then I wrote a little book on Semper in exile [Semper in Exile] and, also, the genesis of Der Stil. That kept me busy for many years.

Your question was how was that related to what was written about-- People who wrote at the time knew Der Stil, which is a relatively late book of Semper's. And then the sons of Semper, in the eighties of the last century, published German translations of certain manuscripts they found amongst his papers. Some were written in German, but the majority were written in English, and a very poor English. And they published his German lectures he gave and translated the English ones into German. That was



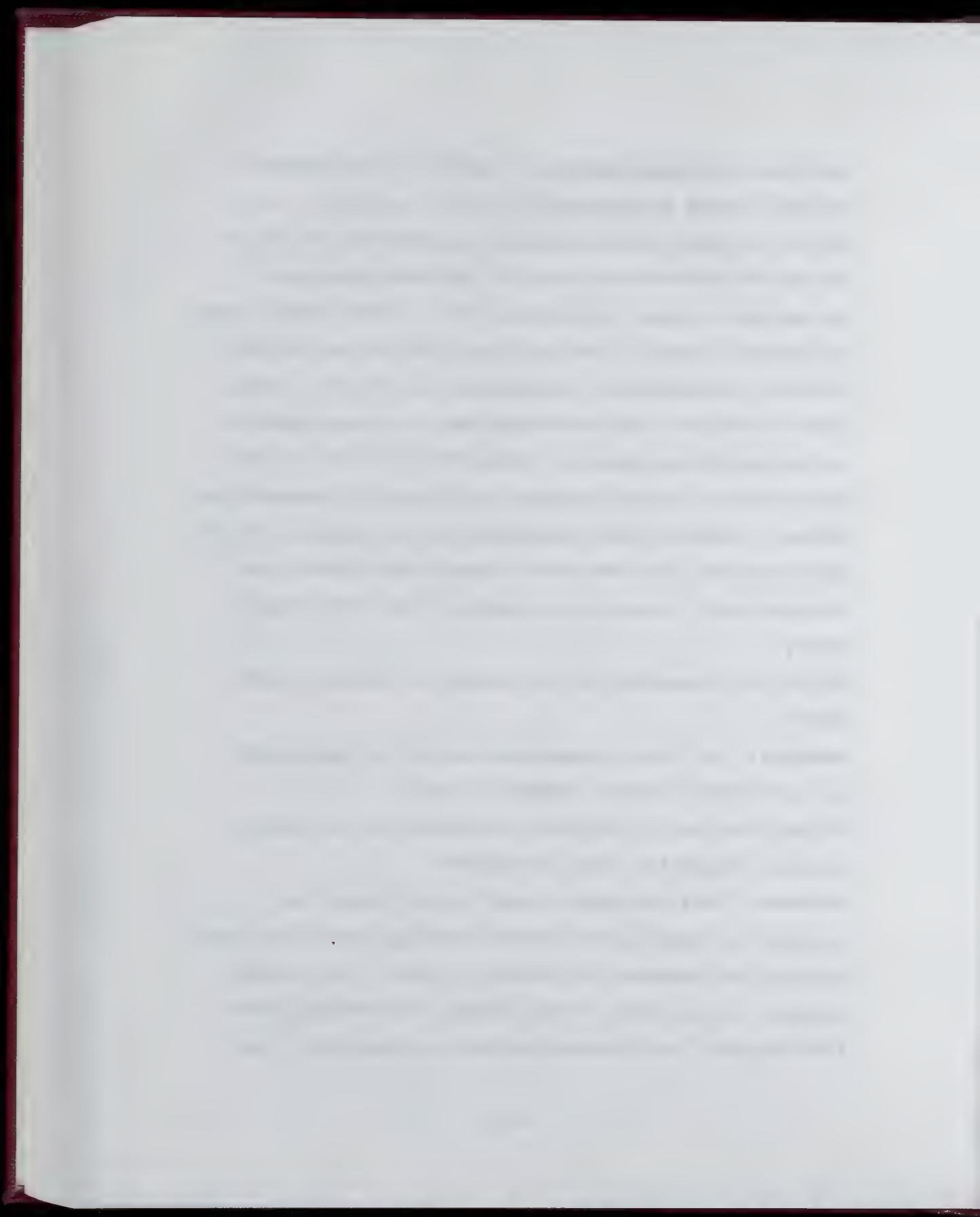
published in Kleine Schriften. And all people before me relied on these Kleine Schriften and on Der Stil. Well, no, and on other books, pamphlets he published and so on. But all the theoretical material, of which there are volumes and volumes, was unknown. And I never wrote a book on Semper's theory. That is going to be written by Harry [Francis] Mallgrave now, and has been written by a young woman in Dresden a few years ago, who, on the strength of my catalog of the material, asked Zürich to send her the photocopies of certain material she thought interested her, taking it from my short description in the catalog. So she was really the first who used it more than I used it in certain-- But I never wrote a general book about Semper's theory.

SMITH: Not comparable to the Laugier or Perrault books, then?

HERRMANN: No. But I translated some of the manuscripts and wrote about certain aspects of Semper.

SMITH: What was it that made you decide not to write a general, theoretical work on Semper?

HERRMANN: It's much too-- First of all, when I had finished the catalog and probably the Exil book, then they asked me to translate the catalog, or what I had written together in the front of the catalog, and the Exil book into English. So I translated that into English. That

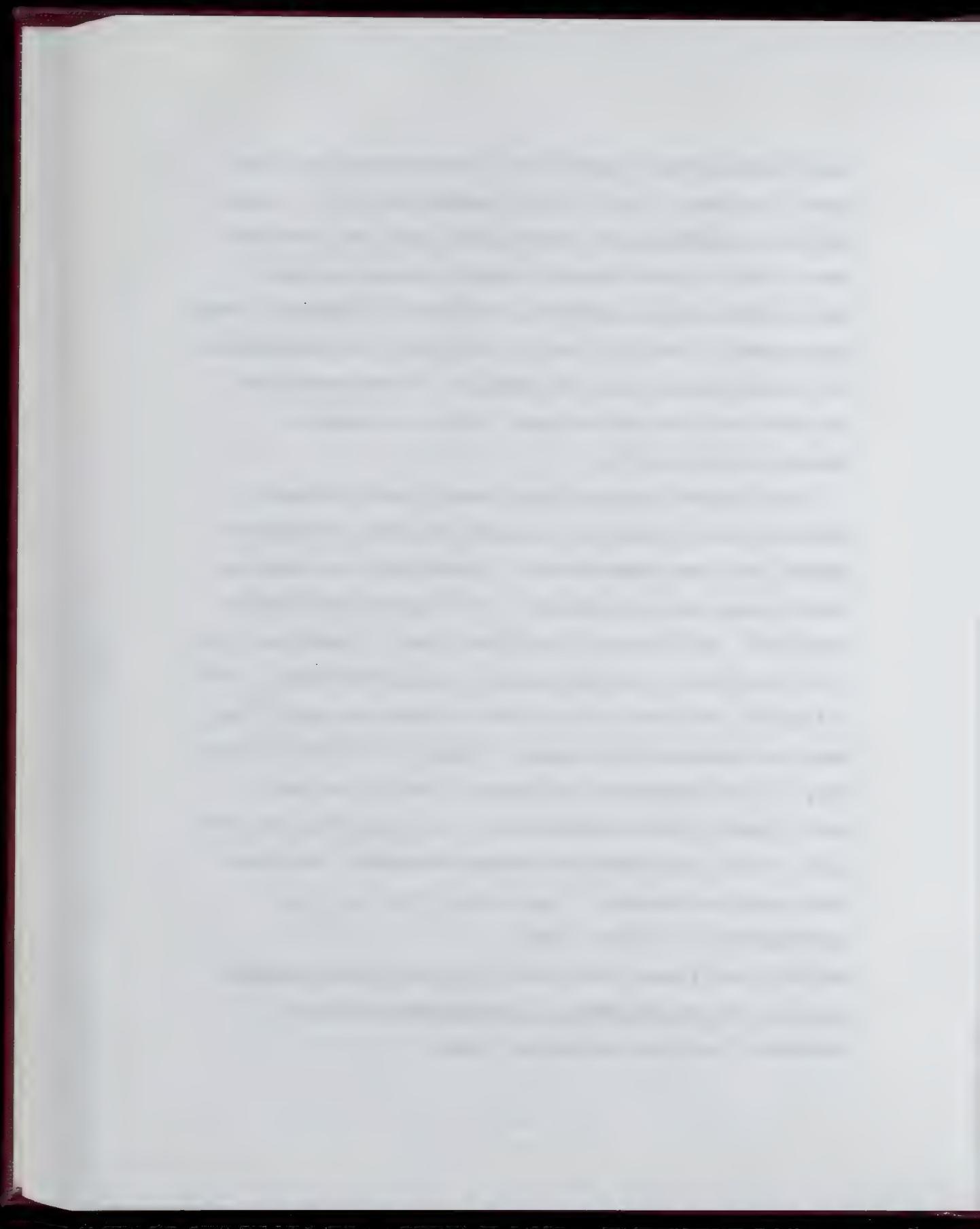


wasn't done within a week or so. It also took me a long time. And then, I don't think I would have-- If I wouldn't have done something else then--[since you] ask, "How did I come to it?"--I don't think I would, because too many people wrote about, generally, the theory of Semper. There was a woman in New York, who is very good, who wrote about it. Harry started to write about it. There were older [writers] who also had written. It's a project-- I wouldn't like to do it.

But at that critical time, Harry, Harry Mallgrave, came and said he wants to translate the main writings of Semper, and then asked whether I would help him, since he doesn't know very much German. He is quite good, but not that good. And whether I would help him. I said yes. So I got into that. For many years I translated Semper. And Mallgrave, when that was finished, he came and said, "Now I want to translate Otto Wagner." Would I help him? I said okay. So we translated Otto Wagner. And after that I said, "Never a translation again." But then they came and said, "Would you translate certain articles?" And there was [Heinrich] Hübsch. I said okay. "And write an introduction." So that I did.

SMITH: That's your latest book [In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on Architectural Style].

HERRMANN: And that is how far I got.



SMITH: When you say "help him translate," what do you mean by that, specifically?

HERRMANN: Well, go through his translation and correct him where he went wrong and improve it and so on. And that took a long time. It wasn't so easy.

SMITH: Your work on Semper has a more complex publishing history. When you started working on it, were you thinking of doing, if not a theoretical work on Semper, did you--?

HERRMANN: No, no. When I-- In England?

SMITH: Yeah. In '73, shall we say.

HERRMANN: No, it was that I wanted to give Semper the same treatment as I had given Perrault or Laugier. I wanted to go into his theory and so on, which is much more--I find now--involved, difficult, and not so attractive. I wanted to do that, but then came this mass of material.

SMITH: Which allowed you to know--

HERRMANN: I can show you upstairs how much that is.

SMITH: But that mass of material allowed you to know Semper better than anybody else at the time. Right?

HERRMANN: Yeah. And then I wrote and published not only the catalog but this Exil. Then there was a symposium in Zürich, and I wrote an article. And also, through all this, I became known as the Semper man who knows-- So many people came and wanted to know this, that, or the other. Of course, some things I could tell them, but when they



came to how this problem or that problem is to be treated, then I had to refer them to other books.

SMITH: Yeah. Why didn't Desmond Zwemmer publish the Semper book [Gottfried Semper in Search of Architecture]?

HERRMANN: Semper? No, it-- I wasn't-- In Zürich, the ETH asked me to do that and paid for it. And then they said, "We have the series." They also published the German.

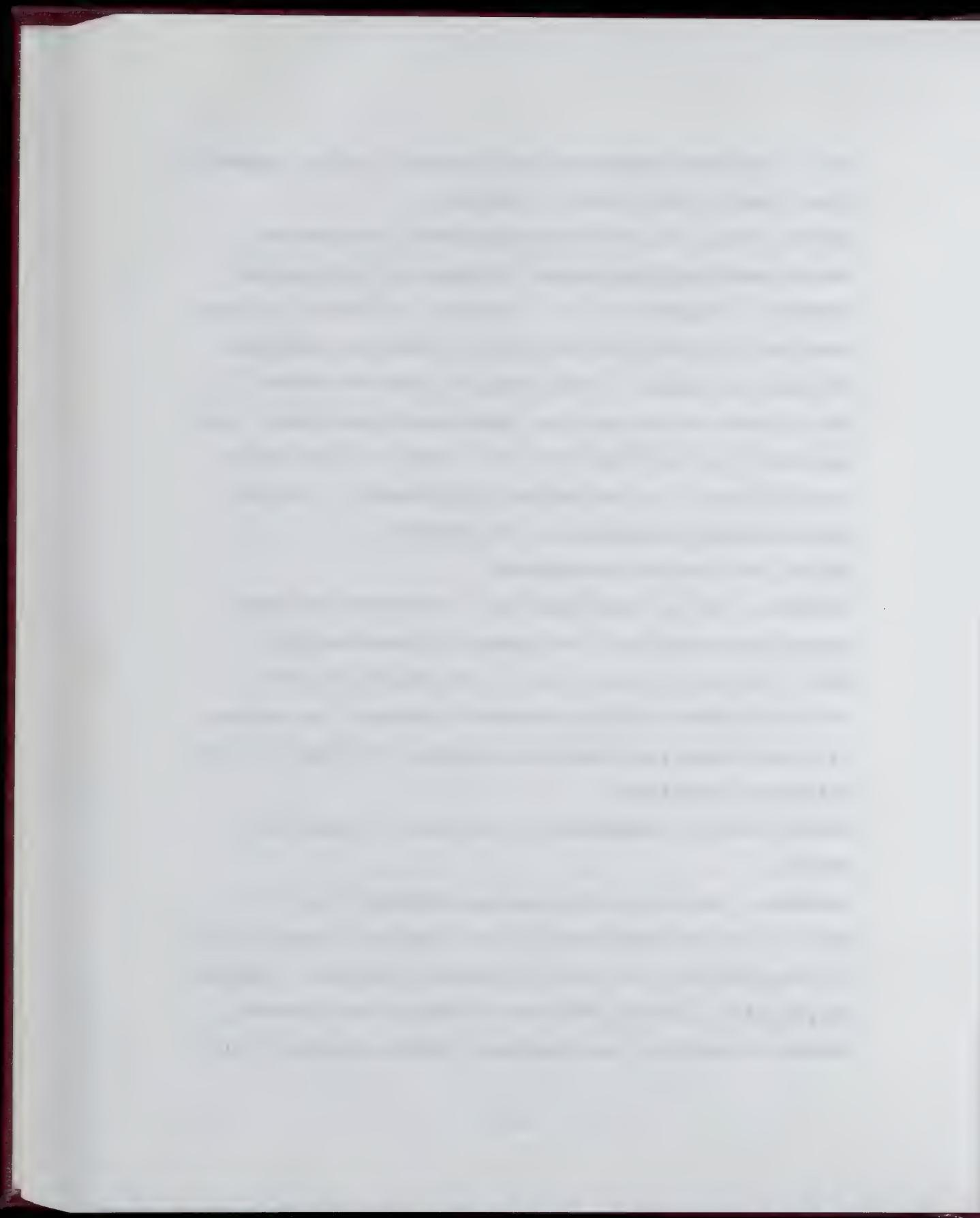
What I wrote in the thirties, which wasn't published, they published it. And then they said, "Well, you can publish the Exil book. You can publish your catalog." And they also published the symposium. So Zwemmer--

SMITH: But then you translated--

HERRMANN: No, and then Vogt, who-- Adolf Vogt was very helpful there and very, very active in promoting all that. And then he said-- And at the time he was then retired and was visiting professor in Boston. So he said, "I tried to get your English translation of a book you have written in Cambridge."

SMITH: The MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] Press.

HERRMANN: The university press or whatever. And he did. While we are on Vogt, Adolf M. Vogt, he was a great friend of mine and still is. And it's owing to him that-- One day he phoned me and said they want to make me an honorary doctor of the ETH. And they did. That's only due to him.



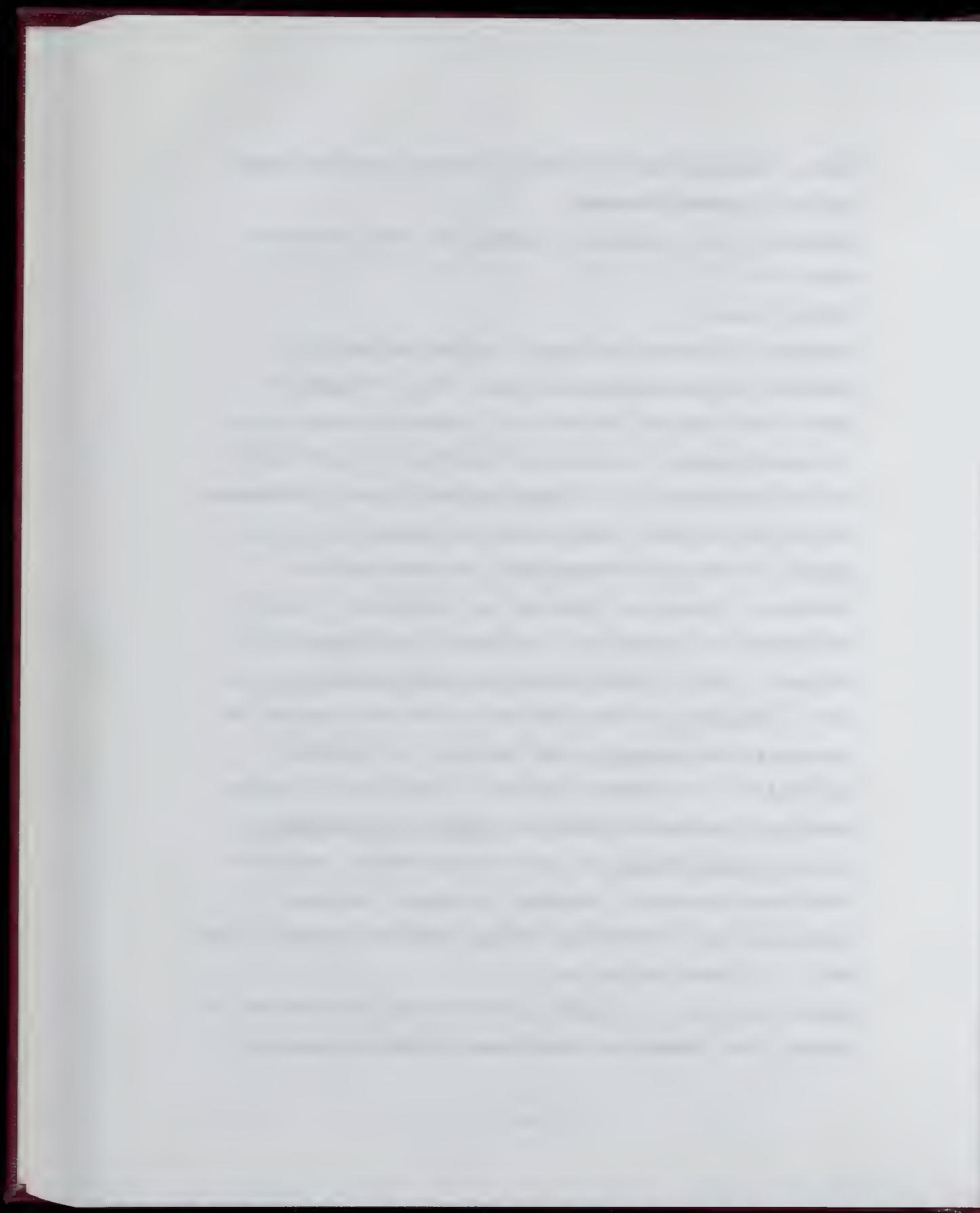
SMITH: Did you find it different working with MIT Press than with Desmond Zwemmer?

HERRMANN: No, I actually-- Zwemmer was very pleasant to work with.

SMITH: Right.

HERRMANN: Nice man, but lazy. He was not terribly dependent on this publishing firm. The old Zwemmer I didn't know anymore, but his son. And he did very little to promote people. He was very reluctant to send copies out for reviewing. And I know that Rudi [Rudolf] Wittkower was on him and said, "That's the only reason why we get people to send you a manuscript. You must send to reviewers. Otherwise, they are not interested." But it was always very difficult. And then--I don't know how it happened, I don't think through him--but somebody put him on to a Belgian publisher who said he would bring out the translation of Perrault. And that did, in the end, materialize. But Zwemmer did very little there. And any other publisher would have got Laugier [and Eighteenth Century French Theory] translated into French. He would have tried something. Nothing. So there, the Basel publishing firm [Birkhäuser Verlag] with the backing of the ETH, it was much easier to--

SMITH: But then, of course, you did three publications on Semper. Now, Semper has now become a popular figure in



this--

HERRMANN: Very.

SMITH: Do you have any speculations as to why Semper should have had a resurgence? How do you explain the fact that Semper has become of such great interest to so many people in the last ten years?

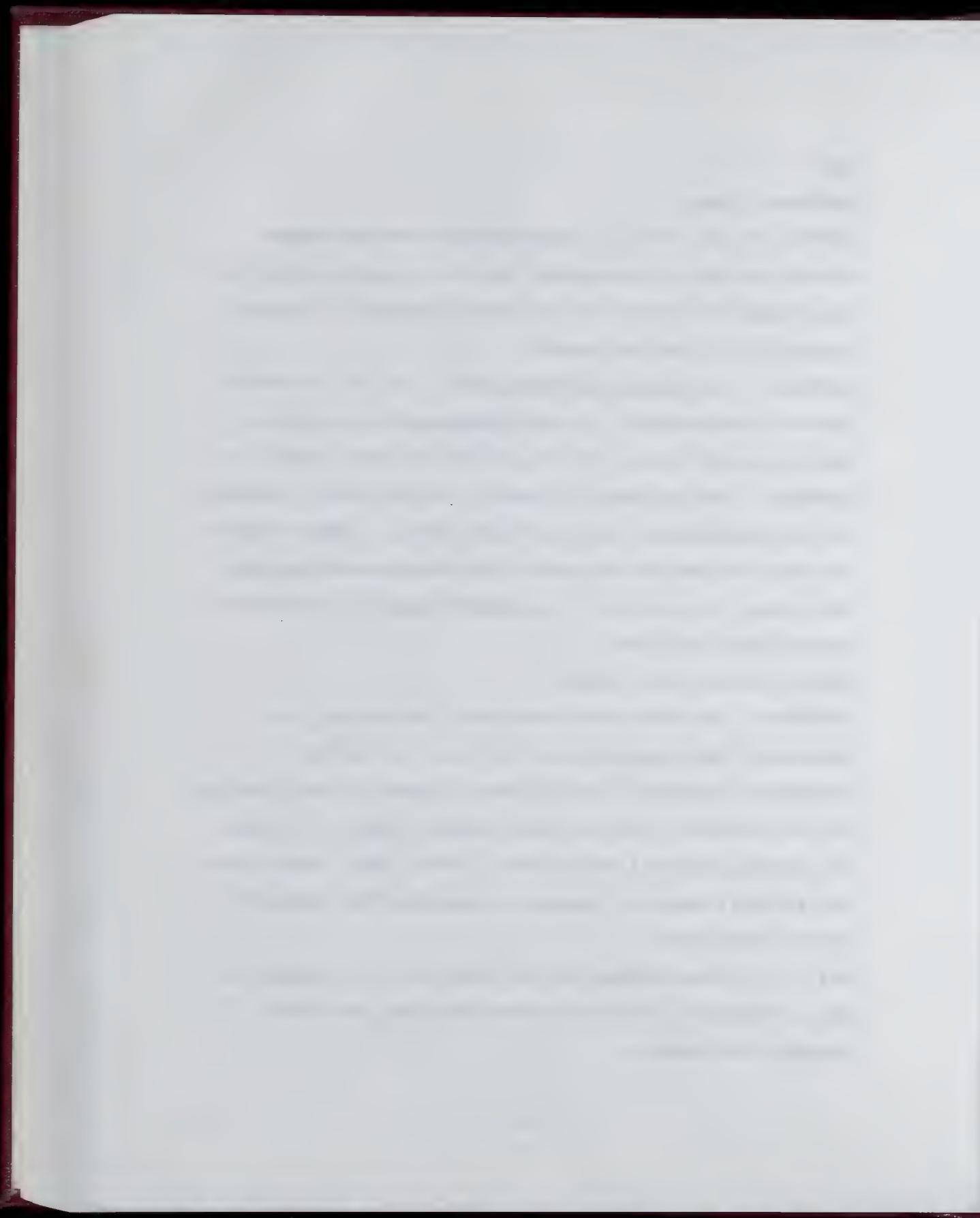
HERRMANN: His theory explains quite a lot of nineteenth-century architecture. You can relate quite a lot to it. I think, in many cases, they try to do too much. But it is possible. And he was at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Semper was at the very low ebb and was very-- But the reaction against that, when the vitality of nineteenth-century architecture becomes more realized--

SMITH: Evident and visible.

HERRMANN: And that takes place now. As far as I am concerned, this reaction is a bit late in the day.

[laughter] Because I--and it sounds boastful--but I wrote in the thirties. Now, it took another-- Well, now Semper has become [popular] thirty years later, forty years later, and it still goes on, because it explains the nineteenth century very much.

SMITH: It also strikes me that your work with Semper has got a different social character than your work with Laugier and Perrault.



HERRMANN: Yeah, much.

SMITH: I mean, with Laugier and Perrault, you were very much of a loner, but with Semper, you are working in an institution, you are involved in symposiums. There's more discussion and collaboration taking place with your work on Semper. That's what I'm hearing. Am I correct?

HERRMANN: Of course, on Laugier, I wrote, in a way, in a vacuum, because there was nobody who had ever written anything, really. I mean, [John] Summerson had written something. But really, nobody had seriously written about him. So there was no response. That was different with Semper. And there, of course, in Zürich, that discussion, and there was the symposium and the people I met. In that way, it was different. But the similar part is that I confined my work very much and very distinctly, and I think I'm inclined to do that always, also with the last one [In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on Architectural Style].

SMITH: The Hübsch?

HERRMANN: Yeah. It isn't a book about Hübsch. It is my introduction. I'm not so sure that it will be, if at all, accepted or well received. There is quite a lot wrong with it. But anyhow, my introduction is confined to one aspect of these thirty years. And a discussion on style took place, and I confine it completely to that discussion. I



find I can't work with a very vague-- Which is a disadvantage, a shortcoming of mine. There are people who only can work if they can spread out.

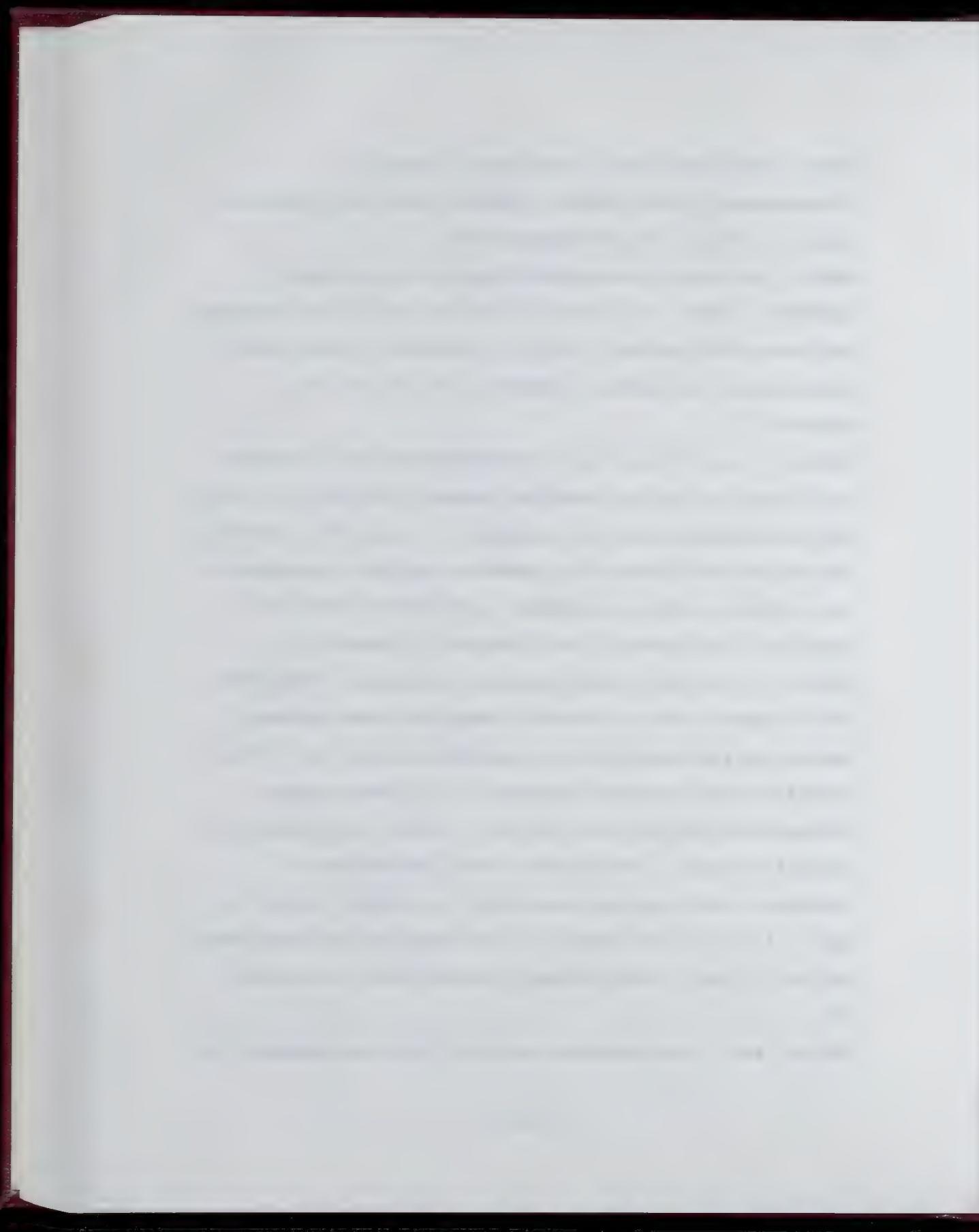
SMITH: But that's your style; that's your approach.

HERRMANN: Yeah. But I can't-- So even when I had response and discussions before I wrote, I confined it very much to that material and certain aspects I got out of the material.

SMITH: I would think one of the disadvantages of working as a loner, as you've described yourself, is that you lack the reinforcement and the criticism. I mean, for instance, in America--and I know it's somewhat similar in Europe--in the academic world, you present your initial ideas in a paper at a conference. Then perhaps you expand, if it works. If you get a good response, you expand those ideas into an article for a journal. Maybe you take another section of your book and do a second article. And, after a period of time, the book emerges out of these ongoing discussions that you have had that involve conferences and journal articles. Do you miss that? How do you--?

HERRMANN: What you just described, I did very little of that. I mean, I did that with this article, and that came out of it, but I didn't go any further then. Also with the--

SMITH: Well, the Desgodets article ["Antoine Desgodets and



the Académie Royale d'Architecture," Art Bulletin (1958)].

HERRMANN: But that finished Desgodets. But I did that.

Then somewhere I wrote that article for Wittkower's

festschrift [Essays in the History of Architecture

Presented to Rudolf Wittkower] on the temple of

Jerusalem. But I didn't follow that up, none of them. So what you just described-- When I came to Semper, of course, there came the Semper Exil book and then a lecture they published and my catalog. But then I worked for a while on this scientific background, on Semper as a-- Semper studied mathematics and was interested in science, and I worked on this and I gave a lecture on that. But that's all. So what you just described, yes, a little bit of that I did, but not-- And that is a Manko [shortcoming]. I mean, anybody else in my profession would have another paper, another paper, and then a larger book, and so on and so on.

SMITH: Part of the problem with the way I described it is it does tend to squelch original contributions. It's a way of channeling things into prescribed, accepted ways of discussing things. And your approach is much freer. But I wonder if you missed the kind of back and forth that the system--

HERRMANN: Yes, probably.

SMITH: I have a question that has to do with your approach to history, which is your basic concept of how historical



evolution works. That's a nice big question.

HERRMANN: Basic--?

SMITH: Your conception, your understanding, of how historical change happens.

HERRMANN: Well, it happens that-- I don't know whether that's what you are driving at. I thought we talked about it. When I left Germany, I couldn't see that I would continue with this art historical approach, which was mainly based on aesthetical interpretation, evaluation, and attribution, but not on facts which explained the historical happenings.

SMITH: But what do you see--? And I'm not pressing to see if you have a fully developed theory of history. But how do you evaluate the factors that cause historical change? Do you see it as being ideas, social forces?

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Evolution of forms?

HERRMANN: Social forces and ideas and certain-- And the taking note of-- Appreciation. Taking note of facts.

SMITH: People taking note of facts.

HERRMANN: It's a historian's [job] to take note of it, which very often they don't. And that the interpretation must be supported by facts, not just by what you think.

SMITH: This is a problem you saw in [Heinrich] Wölfflin, for example?



HERRMANN: Yeah. It was a criticism of Wölfflin.

SMITH: But, aside from how history should be practiced, I'm asking you about how things change in the world. For instance, would you agree with the position that it's the development of technology that has changed the development of architecture in the last two hundred years?

HERRMANN: Yes. Certainly. Yeah, in the last two hundred years. It certainly has an influence. Yes. A great, great influence. So have ideas, but whether they develop without the-- I can't quite explain.

SMITH: Well, do you see ideas, their development, having an independent existence? Or do you think that--?

HERRMANN: Independent of--?

SMITH: Independent of economic and political forces? Or do you see them as really growing out of economic and political changes? Social conflicts?

HERRMANN: Well, economic, of course they have. But I don't think-- It doesn't further the historical knowledge. I mean, economic causes, social causes, of course, change everything. But how far they change forms and how far forms express the change, this is Marxism. And I haven't read any-- There are so many Marxist books where when this explanation comes, you can just cut it out and the book is just as valuable. If somebody writes who is a good historian and a good art historian, but he is a



Marxist, and then comes this-- This is, of course, "This and that is typical for the bourgeois, a time which happened then." They can cut that out. It doesn't in any way give more insight into the building, into the work. And on the other hand, of course, every building somehow will express its time. But to explain form with an understanding of the economic forces or social forces is very doubtful, I think.

SMITH: So when you began writing each of your books, did you have a conception of how men operate in society that would direct you in how you're going to examine their lives? I mean, did you have a conception of how men operate in society that would allow you to go through the material on Laugier or Perrault or Semper and analyze it? I'm asking you what kind of theories that you bring with you, or beliefs, if you want to put it that way, that are handy in terms of analyzing the facts. How do you know what to pull out of the facts that's going to be relevant?

HERRMANN: How to select the facts?

SMITH: What are your guiding principles in selecting the relevant facts?

HERRMANN: I don't think I'm guided by something. Of course, that is a main thing, to select the facts and to evaluate the facts. You think you have an idea that that is important and that's unimportant and so on, but you may



be wrong. You may be completely wrong, you may be a bit wrong, or you may be right. But I'm only guided by what I think is important.

SMITH: In the course of doing the research, did you find any of your initial assumptions about Laugier or Perrault or Semper had to change?

HERRMANN: Oh, yes. Well, that is the most difficult part. When you go on and you select and you come to an idea that this is important, and, at a certain point, you find that it's all rubbish and that it isn't important and then you have to drop it. That is a--



TAPE NUMBER: VII, SIDE TWO

SEPTEMBER 13, 1990

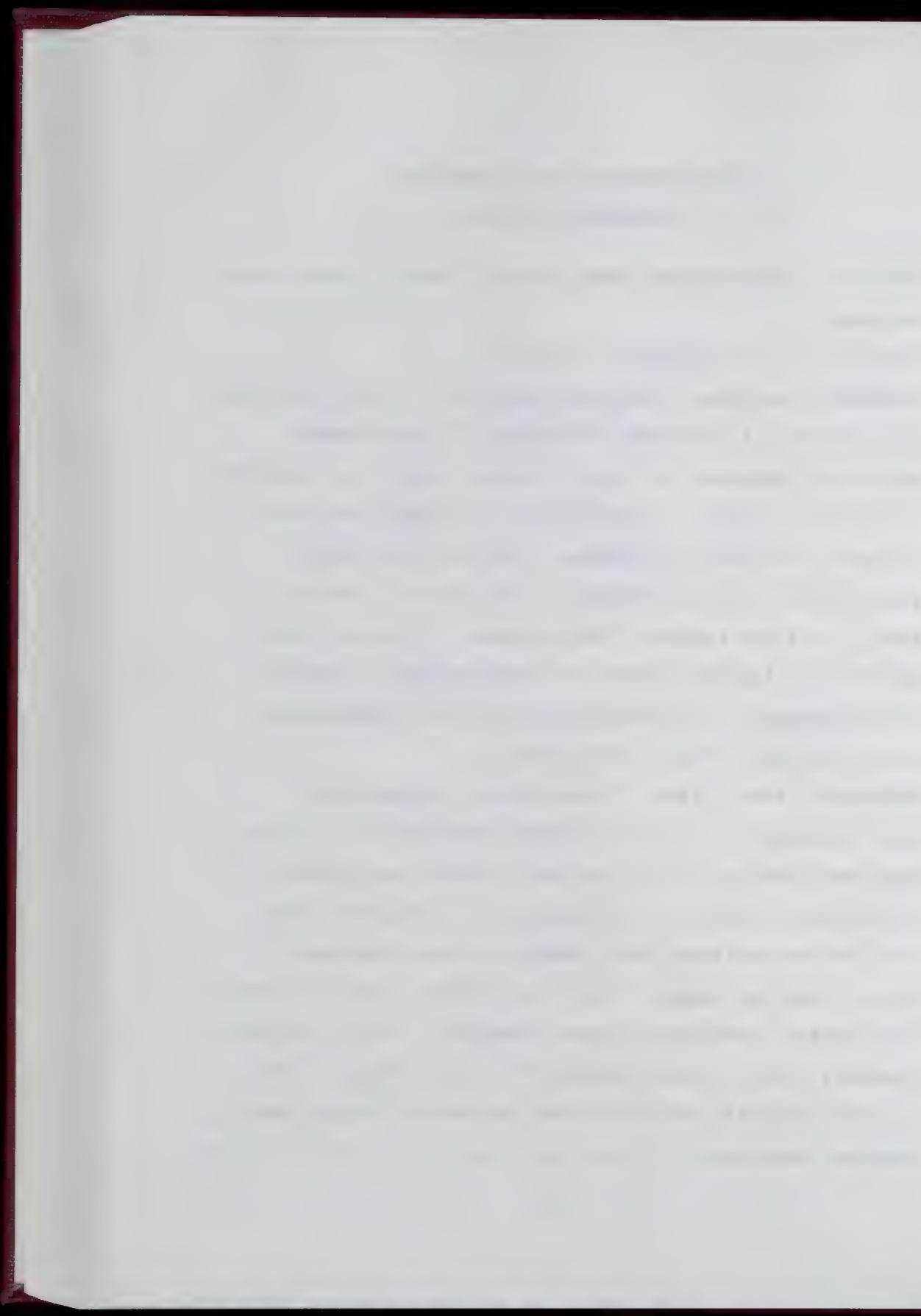
HERRMANN: Preconceived ideas, which I have to prove right or wrong.

SMITH: No, I'm asking you, do you--?

HERRMANN: And when I get onto some work, I have some idea, and gradually I find that it's wrong. A good example, which also happened, is that it may be right, but somebody else had this idea. In which case, I dropped the whole project. But that is a mishap. But when you come to realize that what you thought is not right-- I don't know. It's not because I have a plan. It has to come.

SMITH: For instance, when you read Laugier's Essai [sur l'architecture], you said you had an "Aha!" experience, where you knew, "Yes, I must write--"

HERRMANN: Yeah. Yeah. I knew that. Interesting. I don't remember, but it may be that then, going on, I had the idea that he had this or that attitude and wanted to bring this or that out, or generally, during that time, this was an attitude, and I found out that this wasn't true. That can happen. But I don't know. You will know that better, what makes a good historian. And if you ask yourself, "Am I a good historian?" I don't know. I may write an article like this which sounds all right. And Laugier, apparently, is very good, and so on. But I may be



a lousy historian. How do I know?

SMITH: Well, how do any--?

HERRMANN: That is-- If you are a very good historian, you should probably take in much more than I am capable of taking in.

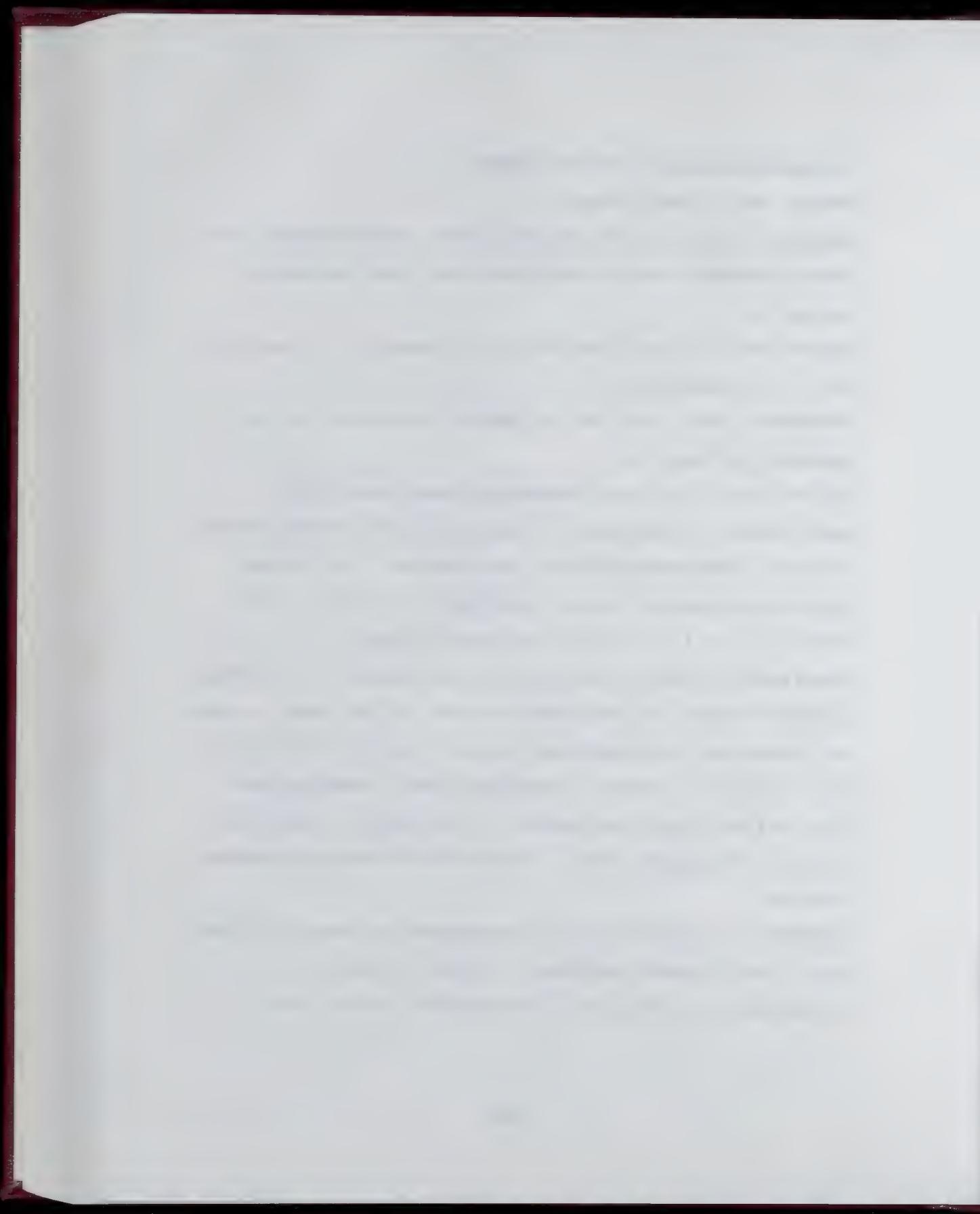
SMITH: Well, I don't see that as a necessity. I mean, in fact, by pinpointing--

HERRMANN: Well, yes, but to take it in and work on it, probably you have to--

SMITH: But also, from discussing these issues with architectural historians, it was unique that someone would focus on architectural theory as a subject. Of course, Blunt had a book on Italian architectural theory in the thirties, but it was still an unusual subject.

Architectural history tended to be the history of buildings and architects. To step back and look at the ideas, in and of themselves, was something unusual. And you have built your historical career on precisely that: stepping back from the buildings and looking at the ideas as ideas that motivate the people, then, to build the kinds of buildings they do.

HERRMANN: I probably got to concentrate on theory in order not to write about buildings, I think. I mean, occasionally I write about architecture, but it is--



TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE ONE

SEPTEMBER 14, 1990

SMITH: I wanted to ask you general questions today, summing up some of the things we've already talked about, returning to some of the themes and issues. I wanted to know, to what degree did your experiences of Nazism affect your views on art history or your practice of art history?

HERRMANN: No. No. No. I don't think that I want to have been influenced by Nazi ideology. Not even in opposing it. No, I don't think at all.

SMITH: Okay. Do you see, then, art and art history as subject areas that are relatively independent from politics in the twentieth century?

HERRMANN: Art and art history independent of politics? No, I don't think it exists. Some way, it will be. It will be. I don't think that politics, really, politics in the narrow sense, would be helpful in interpretation of art and architecture, but it isn't independent.

SMITH: Do you have feelings that scholarship can be helpful in terms of confronting some of the problems of the world?

HERRMANN: Not in my narrow field. If one would write a book to be like that [Simon] Schama, a wide book about the history of all time, then the scholarship would have an influence. But my narrow field, no.



SMITH: In the [Gottfried] Semper book [Gottfried Semper in Search of Architecture], you begin to deal with issues that still have a certain relevance for contemporary urban planning. The question of mass-produced housing.

HERRMANN: But I didn't deal with it.

SMITH: Well, Semper does, so you--

HERRMANN: Semper, yes.

SMITH: In treating him, you are dealing with them.

HERRMANN: If you choose these subjects--and one should, perhaps--then it can, of course, have an influence.

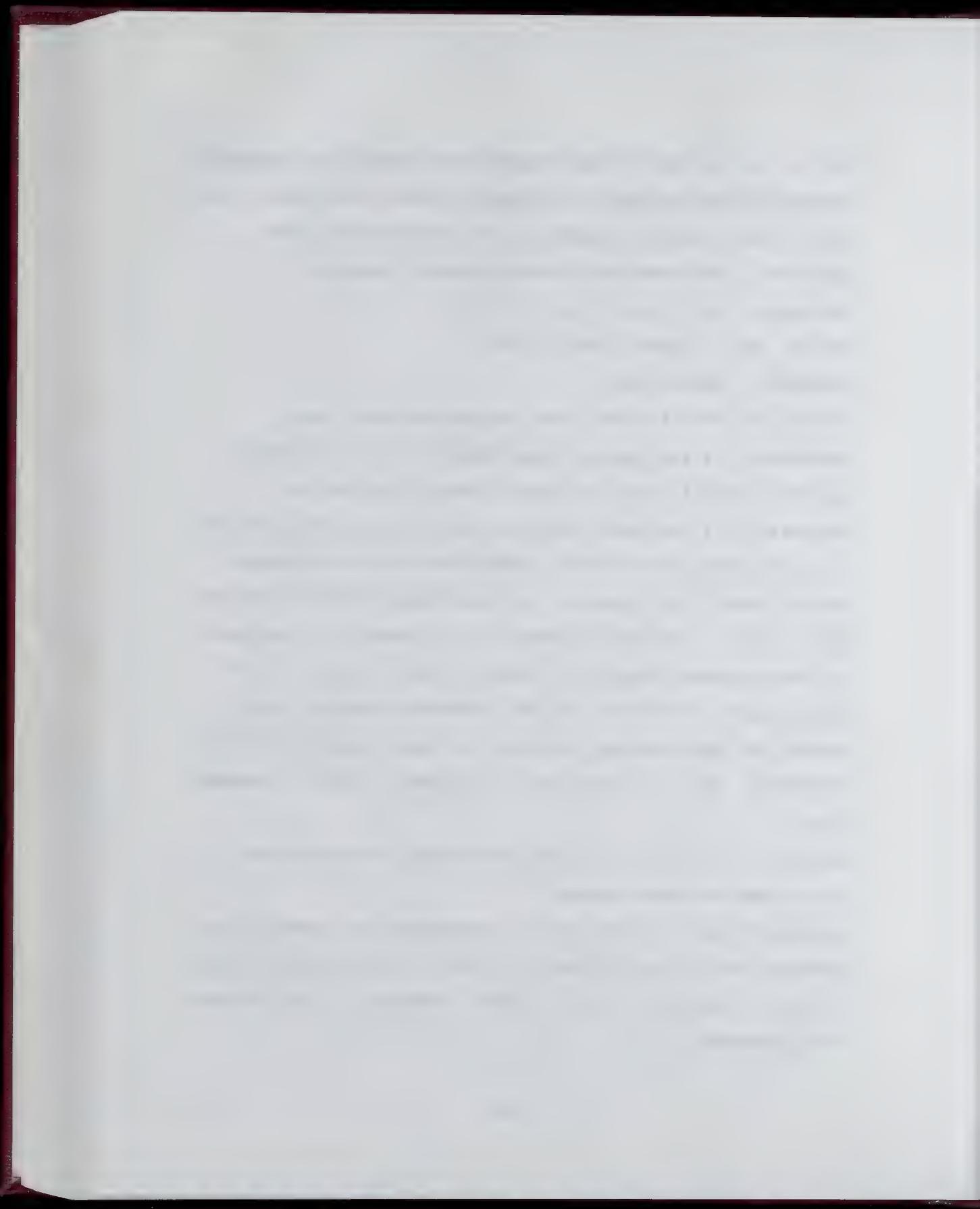
Especially if one deals with the last century, the century just preceding our century. Then there will, of course--

SMITH: Well, for instance, in your Semper studies, did you feel that, in discussing Semper's attitudes, his treatment of mass-produced housing or other issues relating to the development of the city in the nineteenth century, you needed to take your own position on those issues yourself?

HERRMANN: Well, I didn't deal with that. I don't remember that.

SMITH: Well, you do discuss what Semper wrote and felt about some of those issues.

HERRMANN: Well, in the use of technology, of material, new material and-- But he didn't-- I don't think he dealt with it in a-- Well, no. I don't know. Offhand, I can't answer that question.



SMITH: But in terms of how you treated the subject, you felt that it was enough simply to describe the positions he took?

HERRMANN: One could take that subject out and show how it influenced the later development of applied art, yes.

SMITH: Yeah. I guess--similar questions--to what degree did your experiences of exile--?

HERRMANN: My experiences--?

SMITH: Your experiences of having to leave your home, of being in exile from Germany, affect your sympathy or understanding of Semper's life?

HERRMANN: Well, it must have influence. I got into Semper's life. That's how it started. And then, one of his decisive statements, important statements of art historical or theoretical importance, was a few years before the revolution in Dresden and before he had to leave. So that interested me in Semper's life. And I followed that on to his time in Paris and London. Doing this, it became his exile. I didn't set out because it was, but it happened to be. And then the title [Semper im Exil] happened quite at the end of my work. I didn't on purpose, but subconsciously, I must have compared. But, of course, everybody thought that's why and got sympathy with me through Semper. But it didn't arrive in that way. And in addition, Semper isn't a very pleasant-- Wasn't a



hundred percent pleasant character. So to identify myself with him wasn't normal. But, of course, then, somehow--

SMITH: Of course, your approach to material is not exactly biographical, because it really concentrates more on the theoretical ideas of the individuals you've written about. But I wonder to what degree to write about Laugier or Perrault or Semper do you have to begin to feel enthusiastic about their ideas?

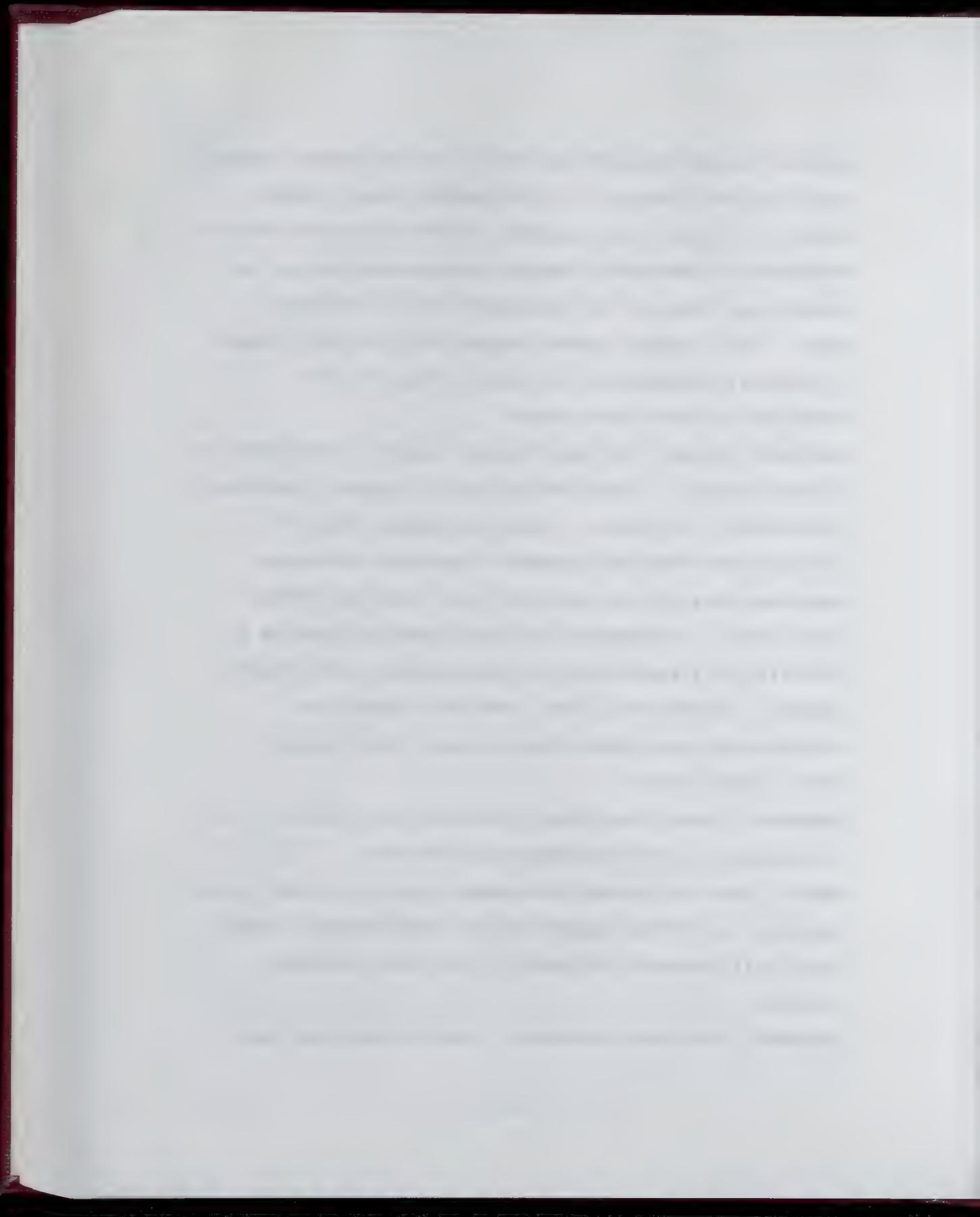
HERRMANN: Maybe. But one thing is, Laugier I only know as a person vaguely. Same with Perrault. Semper I know more as a person. Of course, I have the feeling when I'm writing about them that somehow I make them alive and somewhere they will be grateful to me that they become alive again. That feeling of doing something good as a historian to a person who is-- Enthusiastic with Laugier, perhaps. And Perrault, too. Not with Semper, no. Enthusiastic about their ideas or about their person?

SMITH: Their ideas.

HERRMANN: About their ideas, certainly with Laugier. No, "enthusiastic" with the others goes too far.

SMITH: When you started the Semper study, or rather as you got into it, to what degree did you think Semper's ideas were still relevant for people in the late twentieth century?

HERRMANN: They were relevant. I don't think they are--



Late twentieth century? Now?

SMITH: Now.

HERRMANN: No, I don't think so. No. Interesting, but relevant, I don't think so.

SMITH: The other thing I wanted to ask you, in terms of focusing on theory rather than the object, is how this affects your relationship to the source materials and how you work with the source materials. By being focused on theory, did this affect how you approached your basic sources?

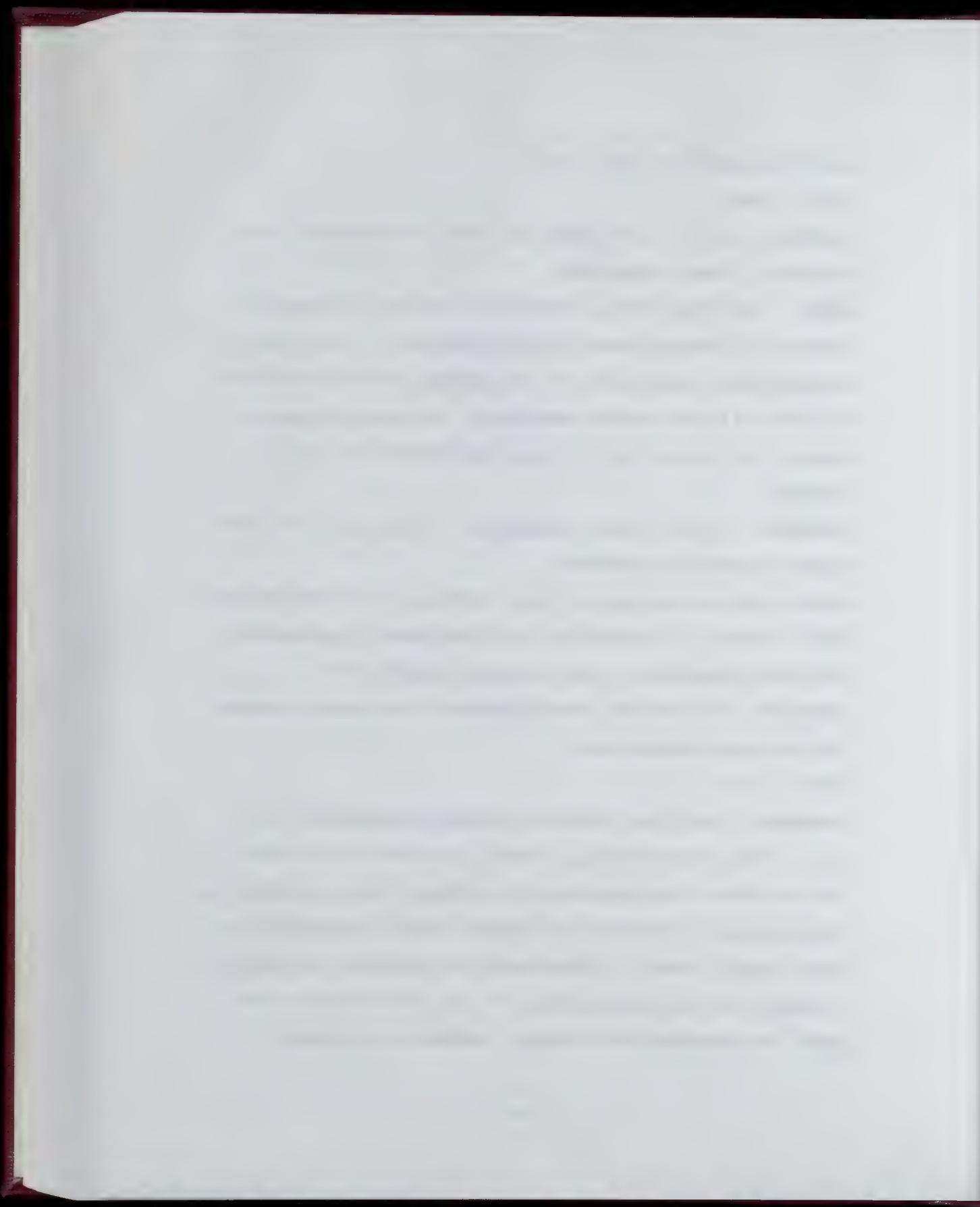
HERRMANN: I don't quite understand, I must say. How the research material affects--

SMITH: Did you analyze it in a different way than had you been looking at the material with the idea of evaluating the works themselves, the buildings themselves?

HERRMANN: How far the theory agrees or explains or makes the building interesting?

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: How close, how more understandable they are. It's-- This relationship, I think, is a very difficult-- Any building of an architect is a visual thing, created for the purpose of creating some visual entity worthwhile, of some value. Theory is completely in the head, and nothing in the-- And the relationship is very difficult and has been, for instance with Semper, avoided by-- Almost



everybody who wrote about Semper has--not completely, but very widely--exempted, excluded, and not touched upon, with a few exceptions. In one case, the latest book on Semper, which is that [one] from the German scholar in Dresden, she tries to explain the works through the theory and vice versa up to a point, but it takes a very small part of her big book. And I saw that Harry [Francis] Mallgrave, on his proposition, has that as one section. I'm very curious to see. That would be very, very new and very interesting.

But it's very difficult.

SMITH: I would think particularly with the Laugier book [Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory], where you have to connect theory with buildings which technically have nothing to do with that theory, such as the Madeleine or the Saint-Sulpice.

HERRMANN: Yes, but, more or less indirectly, the architects may have been influenced. And in that time, when the architecture consisted of a certain set of rules and a certain dogma, the relationship is much easier to establish if it is a purely intellectual constructionary theory. It's much more complicated with Semper, I think.

SMITH: What about with [Heinrich] Hübsch? Was Hübsch also an architect?

HERRMANN: Yeah. Well, he-- There, the connection is perhaps easier. He had certain features he propagated, and



those features, on some of the buildings, he adhered to.

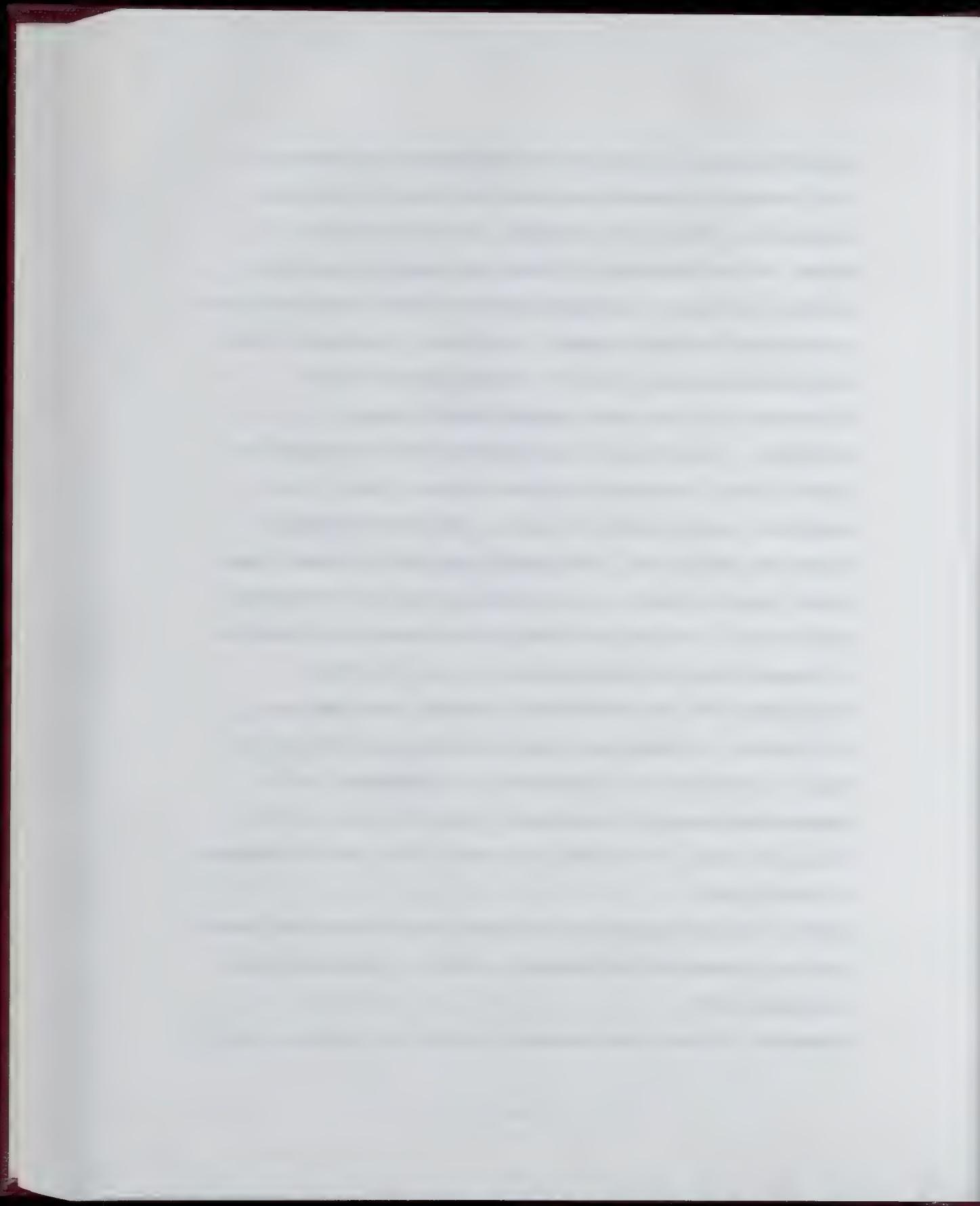
Yes, there is a connection also with some of the other architects. There it's perhaps, easier and closer.

SMITH: We've discussed a little bit your philosophical studies, and you've expressed several times that you're not comfortable with philosophy, or at least, certainly, not with phenomenology. But I'd like to ask you more specifically if you have studied Kant or Hegel.

HERRMANN: I can't say I have studied Kant and Hegel, no. I mean, when I started my student career, then I had to read Kant, and I read a bit more. But phenomenology I tried and gave it up. And Hegel from time to time-- Even later, Hegel entered into the time and was an influence. But really, I am not qualified to talk about any books or go deeper into the relationship of, say, the Hegel philosophy with the theoretical writing, how they are influences. I touch upon them in a very superficial way. Hegel's order of art is obviously an influence, or is repeated by some of the writers. But it's just on the face, not deep. Of course, one could, but I am not capable of doing that.

SMITH: To what degree do you think an art historian needs to have a grasp of philosophy in order to formulate his or her questions?

HERRMANN: It would be certainly useful if they do. And I



didn't. So it's a Manko [shortcoming] on my side. But generally, I think they should, if they are capable of really absorbing. If they use it just to do a superficial analogy between Hegel and Perrault, then it isn't--

SMITH: Yeah. Okay. You had mentioned in our first set of sessions in Santa Monica that you had been influenced somewhat by Kurt Cassirer's work on French architectural theory.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: Did that include Perrault and Laugier?

HERRMANN: No, Laugier, not. At the time?

SMITH: Yeah.

HERRMANN: At the time, when I read Kurt Cassirer's book-- Not Laugier. That I would remember. Perrault, it's possible. And he was, Kurt Cassirer, one of the few people who were concerned with architectural theory. So in that way, he influenced and interested me.

SMITH: I also wanted to ask you more about how you met Rudi [Rudolf] Wittkower. I think you said you actually met him first here in London in the 1930s.

HERRMANN: If you ask my wife [Anni Marx Herrmann], you get much better information. I remember him in Berlin, but I don't think that I really met him. But he was a very tall man, and was, apart from this, further advanced than we were. He was already, as a student at that time, more



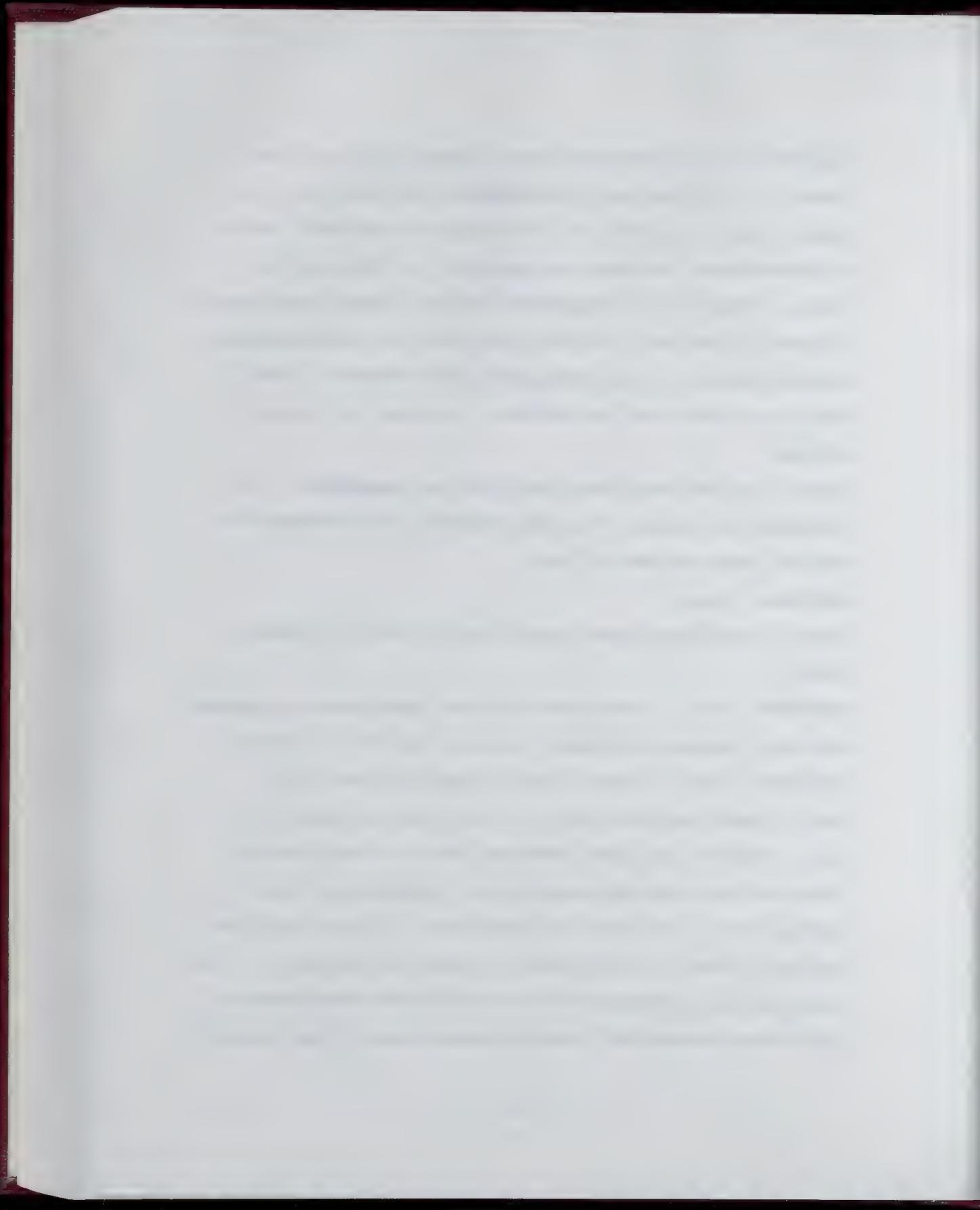
confident in his knowledge than we were. So, for that reason, or at a seminar and discussion he took, for that reason I just noticed him. But I didn't meet him. But if it's important, you must ask my wife. We then met in London. Right at the beginning, in '33, there was a cousin of mine, a musician, and his wife, and they lived together, amongst others, in one house with the Wittkowers. And that's how there was the contact. I think that's how it started.

SMITH: You had mentioned the other day, yesterday, that Wittkower had decided that he needed to leave Germany much earlier than the rest of you.

HERRMANN: Yes.

SMITH: Could you repeat that? Go into that a little bit more?

HERRMANN: Well, I only heard of that very recently through his wife [Margot Wittkower], who said she found a letter from Rudi. And I think it said-- She told Anni, so I wasn't there when she told it. So I have to repeat it. But I think it was right that he-- He must have been in Munich at the time and heard Hitler addressing in some public place. And there he wrote back, "I heard that man talking. This is not a country we want to settle in." And that may have influenced him to accept his appointment to go to Rome, where they lived for many years. Then Cologne



offered him a professorship at Cologne University. And that must have been in '32 or '31 that he also wrote to her, "They want me to accept that for good and ever. I think we shouldn't do it. We won't stay in this country." And that is-- Not many people, certainly not in '22, drew that conclusion. That's rare. But even in '31, for somebody-- Obviously, they offered him a position where he could settle down on that position. And it was a chair in Cologne. It was something you don't just turn away. I entered the service of the art department, also, round about that time. But nobody said, "Would you bind yourself down for the foreseeable future?" Nobody asked me that, but I never thought, in '31, when I moved up, that I would have to leave Germany.

SMITH: Even in '31?

HERRMANN: No. No. I knew what was coming, but that it would mean we couldn't stay? No. I didn't. Then, when it really broke out in '33, then, of course, it became a possibility. But to decide on it wasn't that easy.

SMITH: You've mentioned that before.

HERRMANN: And, as I mentioned, it was a bit easier, perhaps, for Rudi, but not in '31. Nobody knew of the anomaly of the nationality. He had that. And I think in '31, even he didn't know that his father was born in England and, for that reason, he can claim his [British]



citizenship. Nobody thought along these lines, weren't informed. So that he probably found out in '33. Then people suddenly discovered strange things happening in their--

SMITH: I also noticed that in your correspondence with Wittkower about the Laugier book, you had written to him that you wanted to do a book about new trends in architectural thought around 1750, and he had suggested that you really focus on just Laugier.

HERRMANN: Did he?

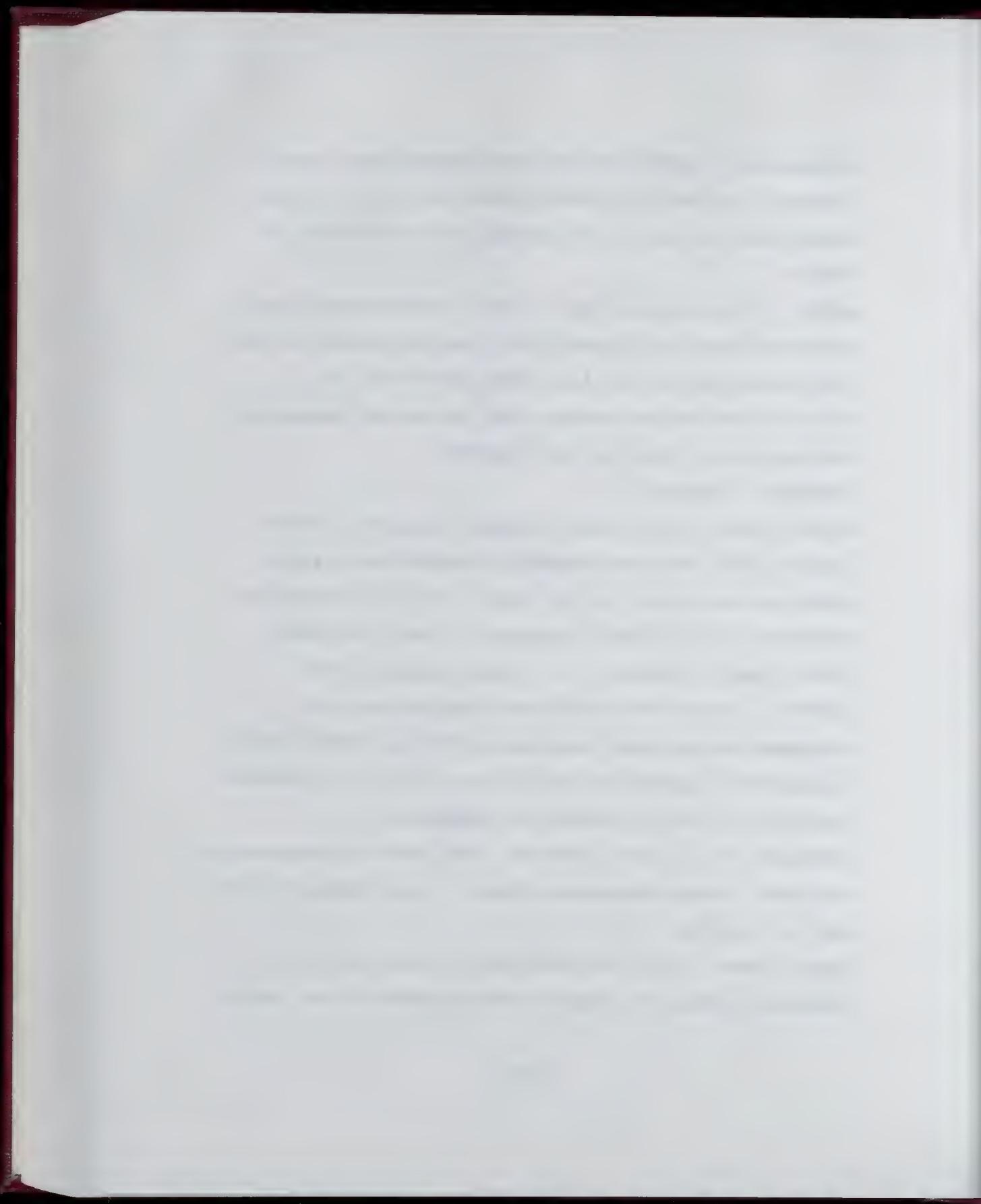
SMITH: Yeah. So, in your original conception of the Laugier book, were you thinking of something a little larger in scale than how the book eventually turned out?

HERRMANN: Well, I don't remember it, but I obviously didn't take his advice. No, I don't remember that.

SMITH: I also wanted--since you were dealing with biography--to get your assessment of Wilhelm Waetzoldt's biographical approach to art history. Did that influence you at all either positively or negatively?

HERRMANN: No, I don't think so. No, these biographies by Waetzoldt I came across much later. I met Waetzoldt, but not as a scholar, no.

SMITH: Okay. So at the time when you knew him in the 1920s and 1930s, his biographical approach did not really



leave much impression on you?

HERRMANN: No. No.

SMITH: Okay. I also wanted to have you talk a little bit about your relationship with Lucien Freud.

HERRMANN: Well, that is the son, yeah?

SMITH: Or the grandson?

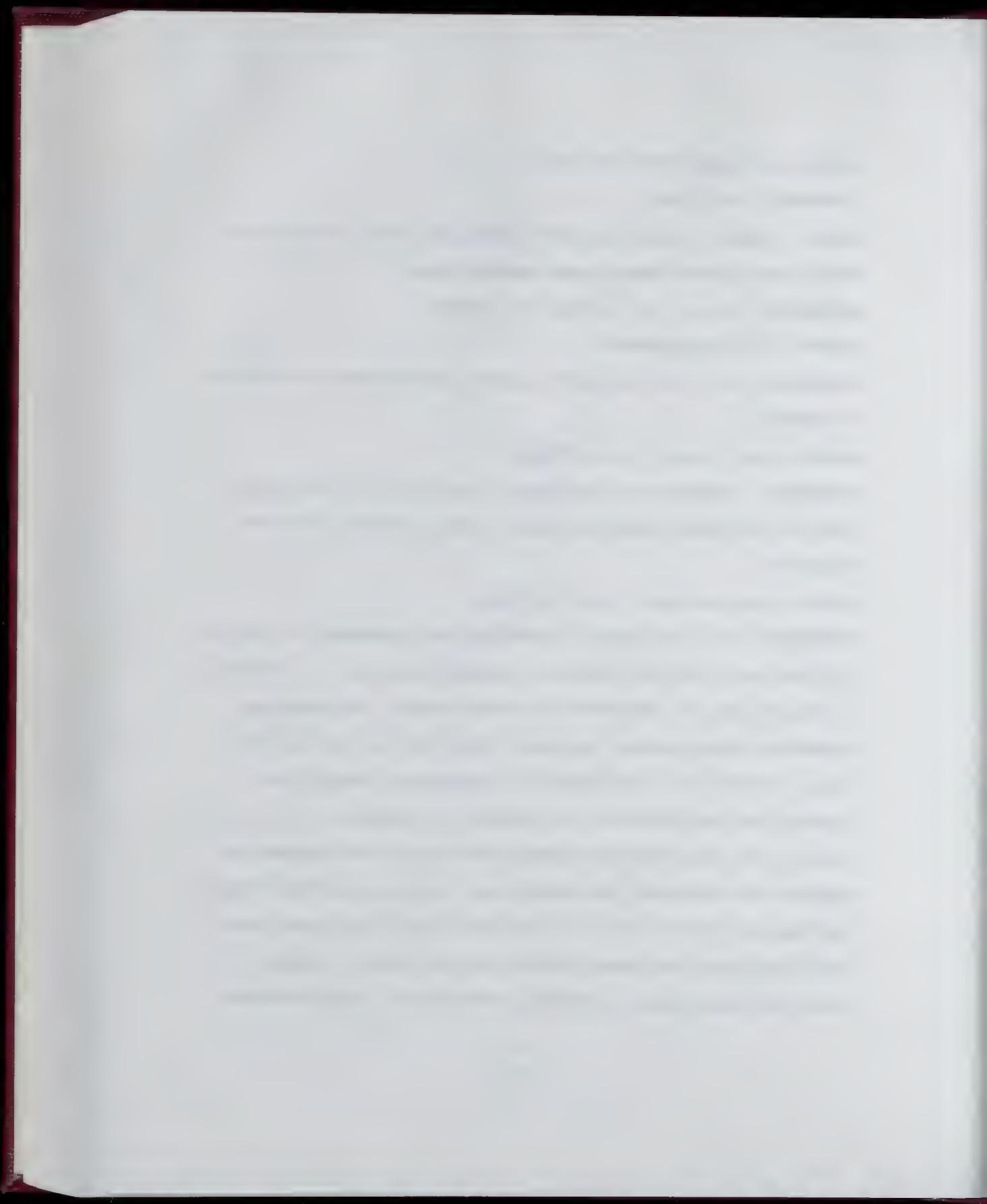
HERRMANN: No. We both had a close relationship to the son of Freud.

SMITH: Oh. Okay. Ernst Freud.

HERRMANN: Ernst Freud, who was an architect. And we met him for the first time in Berlin. But probably I talked about it.

SMITH: No, we haven't on the tape.

HERRMANN: No? All right. When we were engaged, we bought a house, and for that house we needed furniture. A friend of Anni's was an assistant of Ernst Freud. And when we talked to that friend, he said, "Well, he is the man you want," which was quite normal in Germany at that time, anyhow, for an architect to design, if necessary, the whole thing. Not only the furniture, but also if you wanted to change the building. So that's how we got onto Ernst Freud and became friends with his wife and him. And there were the three boys, who were little boys by then. We were often in their house, and they visited us. Then we moved



to London at the same time, in '33--they were early here, we were early--and we met them here. And then he did work for us. But, in particular, then, my father-in-law [Adolf Marx] bought a place and had a house built for himself, and he gave the commission to Ernst Freud. And then, when we moved here, he redesigned this house. Then, of course, at that time, we also met the rest of the family. I don't think we ever met the Freud, old Freud, father Freud, when he was here for a short time, six months or so. But we met Ernst Freud; the architect's sister, who was Anna Freud, who was a psychoanalyst, quite well known; and met, also, the son, a little bit more-- The oldest son [Stephan Freud] and Clemenz. I knew Clemenz faintly and the painter [Lucien Freud] also, but not very closely.

SMITH: Okay. How much do you continue to follow developments in art history in Germany?

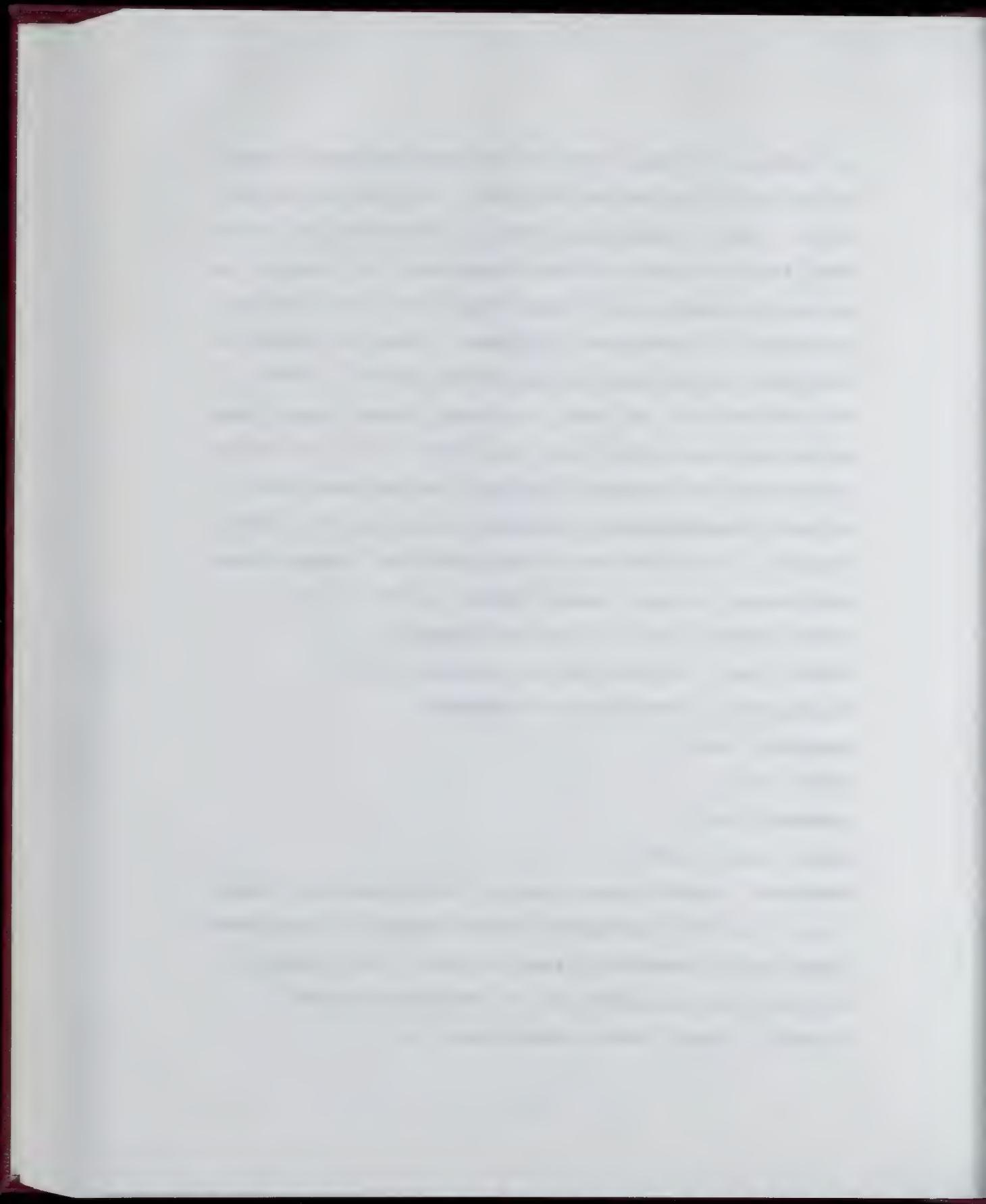
HERRMANN: Now?

SMITH: Now.

HERRMANN: No.

SMITH: Not at all?

HERRMANN: I don't bother, really. With regards to Semper, I did. No. Not development of art history. I read recent books which interested me about my work. But I couldn't say that I was interested in the development of art history. I don't know anything about it.



SMITH: Do you follow art history as it's developing in Britain? I mean, in terms of reading the journals here?

HERRMANN: Yes, yes. Probably not very intensely, but I did. Yes. But not--

SMITH: Have you been consulted at all during the restoration of any of the Semper buildings?

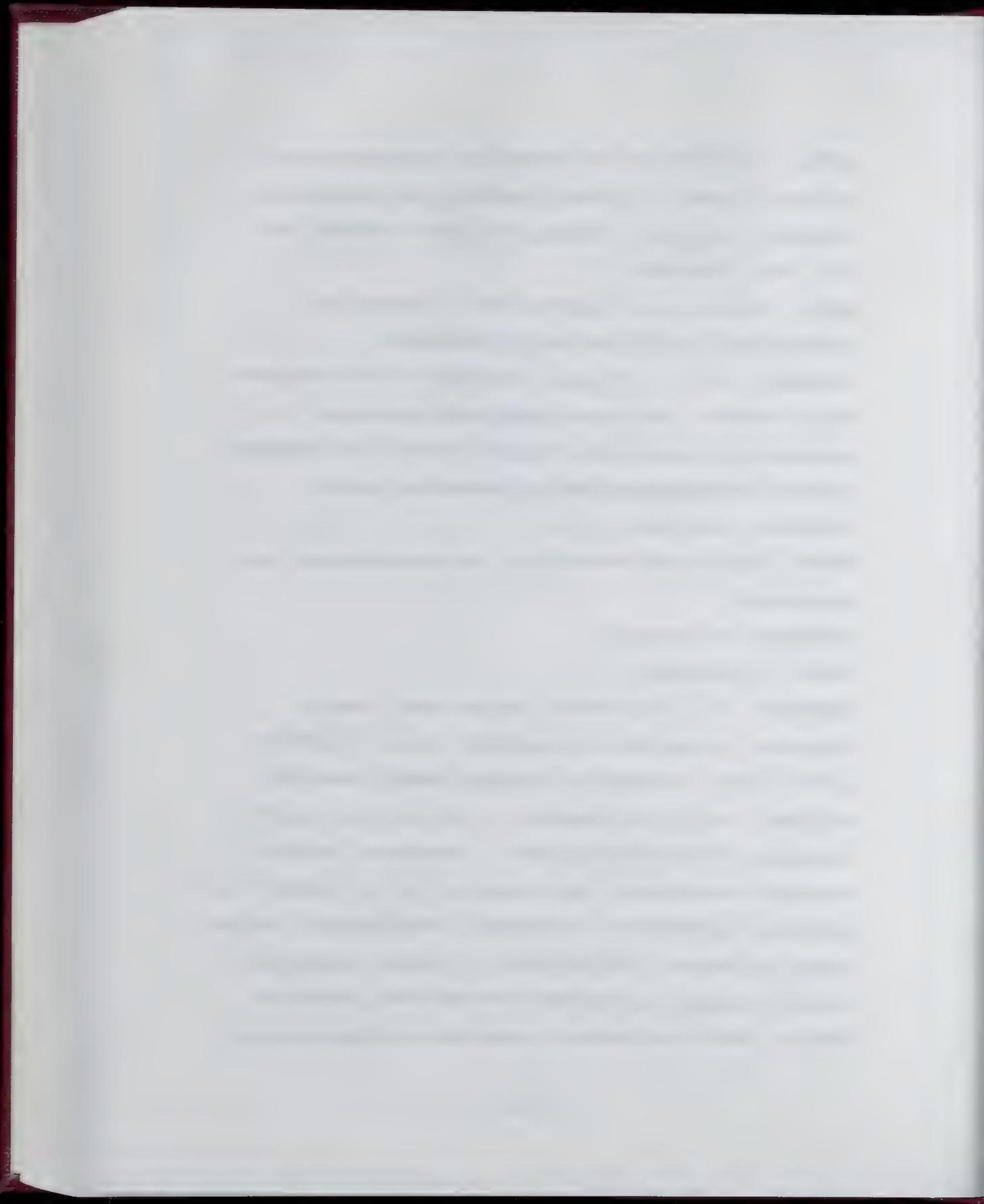
HERRMANN: No. No. We were there when the building was being restored. And other people were consulted. For instance, in Vienna, where Semper's theater was restored, [Renate] Wagner-Rieger, she was consulted, Martin Fröhlich. But I wasn't, no.

SMITH: This is the Staatsoper? The restoration of the Staatsoper?

HERRMANN: In Dresden?

SMITH: In Dresden.

HERRMANN: No. I was there, and so-- But I wasn't consulted. I wouldn't be consulted, because I had not written about or talked or concerned myself about the building. And to be consulted, I must have an intimate knowledge of the building itself. Otherwise, whatever I say has no foundation. And I can say that in Dresden I was celebrated and honored, everything. They thought I am the expert on Semper. But they were, of course, aware that I haven't written, really, about the building, about any design. And in my catalog, I excluded his descriptions.



Also in manuscript form. They are long descriptions or explanations relating to the building. And I on purpose excluded these, because they were relevant to what Martin Fröhlich did. He made a catalog of the designs for buildings.

SMITH: I see.

HERRMANN: And after discussion with him, I said, "I will exclude them from me, because they are of a different character." All the rest is purely theory. This relates to an actual building and is interesting for people interested in what he built. And he should publish it. He agreed, and I left it out. But he never did it.



TAPE NUMBER: VIII, SIDE TWO

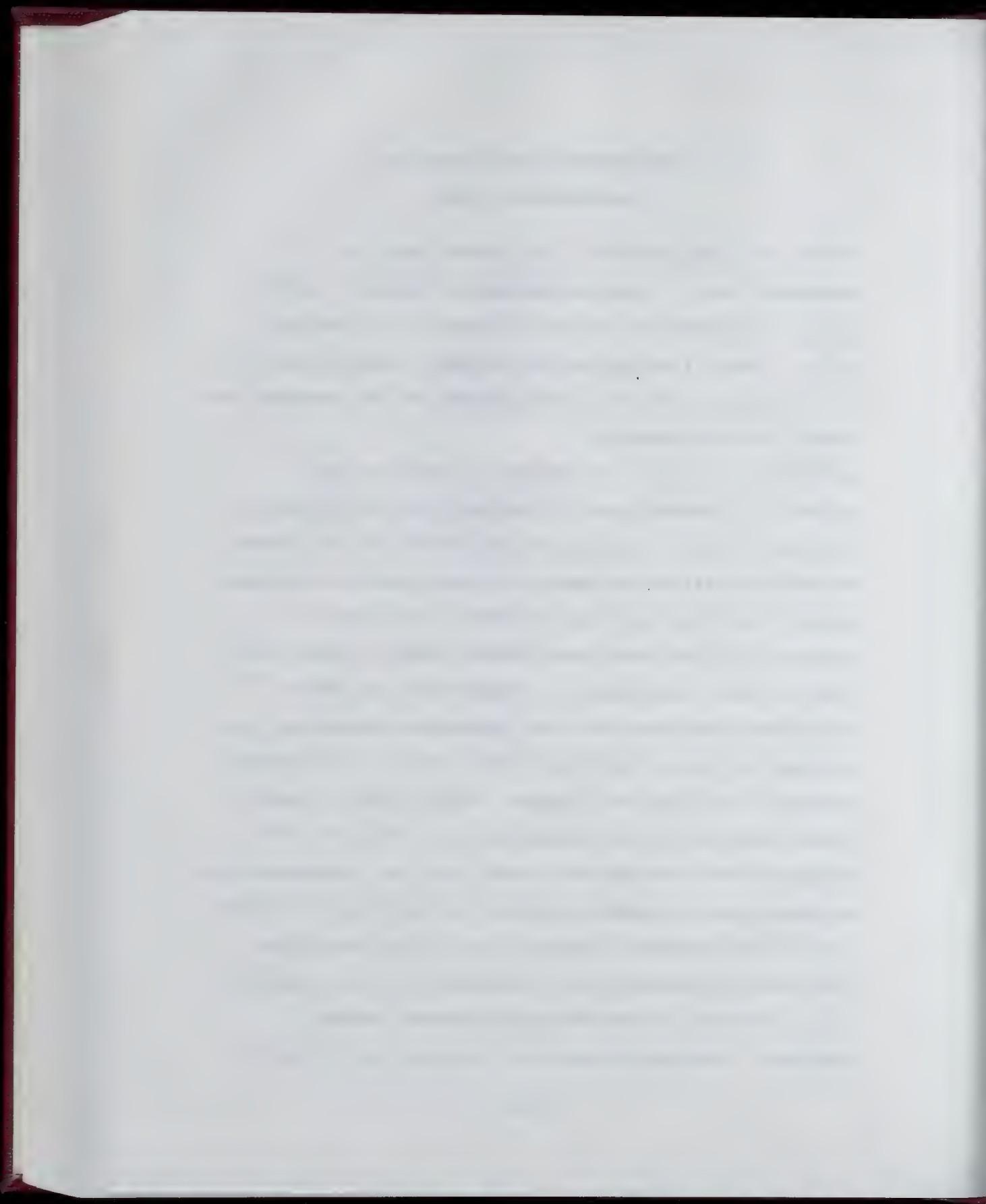
SEPTEMBER 14, 1990

SMITH: So a big section of the Semper book is--

HERRMANN: Yeah. It may be perhaps 10 percent, more or less, of the material was not included in the catalog.

SMITH: Couldn't one argue that Semper's descriptions of his buildings would be a way of seeing how he connected his theory with his practice?

HERRMANN: Yes. Yes. Of course, it would be very helpful. I remember when I discussed that with Fröhlich, I pointed out that, strangely enough, there are big, large manuscripts written by Semper in Vienna when his building-- Several buildings were made in Vienna. But also in Dresden. His Hoftheater was rebuilt after it burnt down. That he wrote long reports on these buildings almost exclusively concerned with the figurative decoration, the figures, and who is entitled to be-- It's a more literary concern of his with the figures: who is right to have a place there and in what connection, and then also, what sculpture would be employed there. And that interested him enormously and is something which, at this time, the later part of the nineteenth century, was of high importance. The symbolic decoration of a building, which we completely lost. Epicurus or some Roman philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. Some people should be included, should not be



included. And then they stood there on top of the building. For us, we can hardly visualize that somebody would take notice of it, that this philosopher is included and that is not and it meant something. But the fact that Semper spent a lot of time on these questions, and there is not a word about the building in these cases-- Then there are others. He made a big project for Rio de Janeiro, a theater. There, he is more explicit. And it's interesting. As I said, they were excluded on purpose from the catalog, and I think quite rightly. But I had the hope that they would be included there. I still have the index cards of them.

SMITH: Okay. I did also want to ask you--

HERRMANN: It would be an interesting job for somebody.

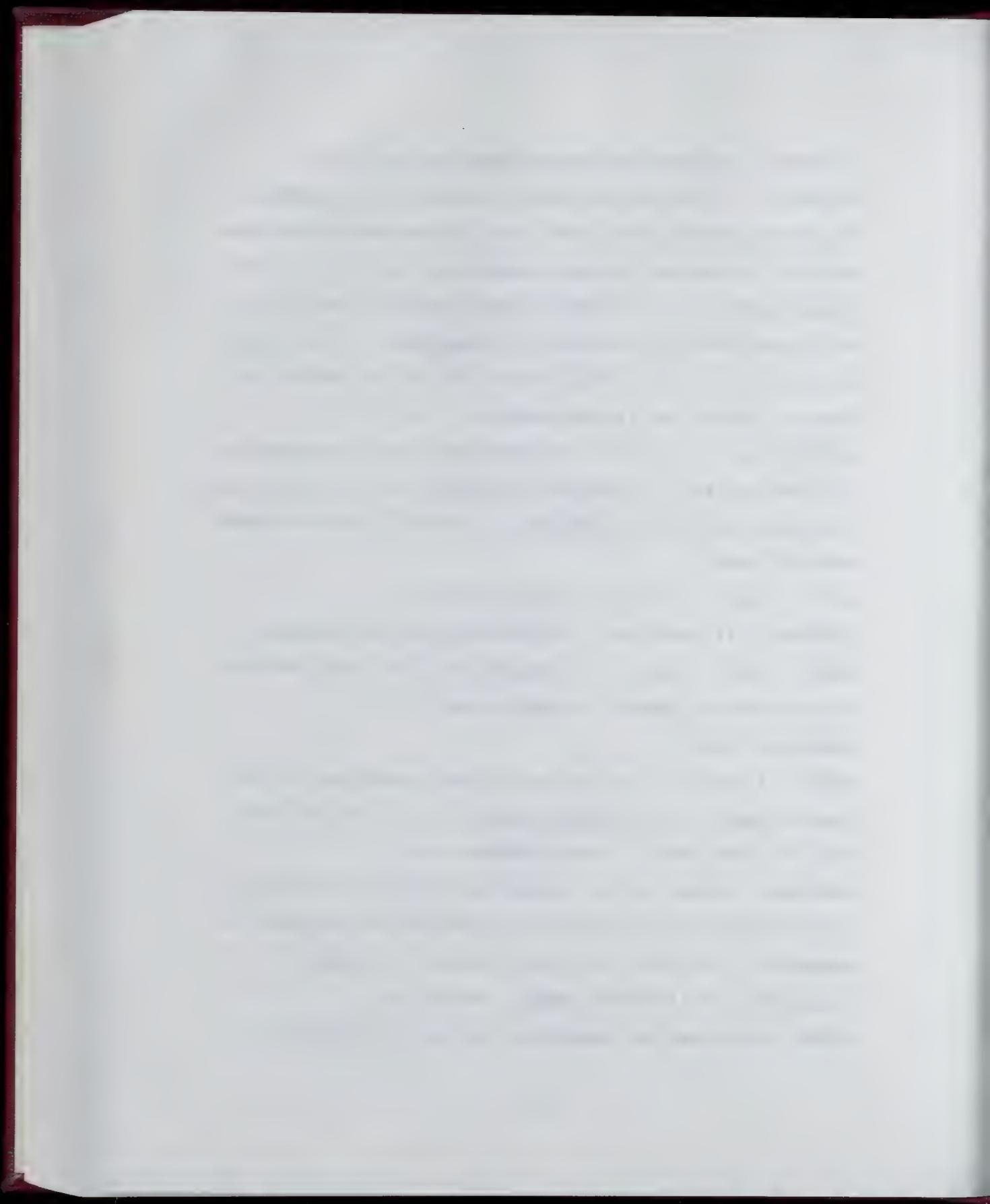
SMITH: Yes, it would. It probably will be done, because the interest in Semper is growing now.

HERRMANN: Yeah.

SMITH: I wanted to ask you about the translation of the Laugier Essai [sur l'architecture] that you and Anni did, how that came about. [tape recorder off]

HERRMANN: Marcus Whiffen suggested to invite scholars to participate with his college on a publication program. He suggested, "You might well be interested in doing a translation of Laugier's Essai," and so on.

SMITH: So it was not something that you had planned on



doing yourself?

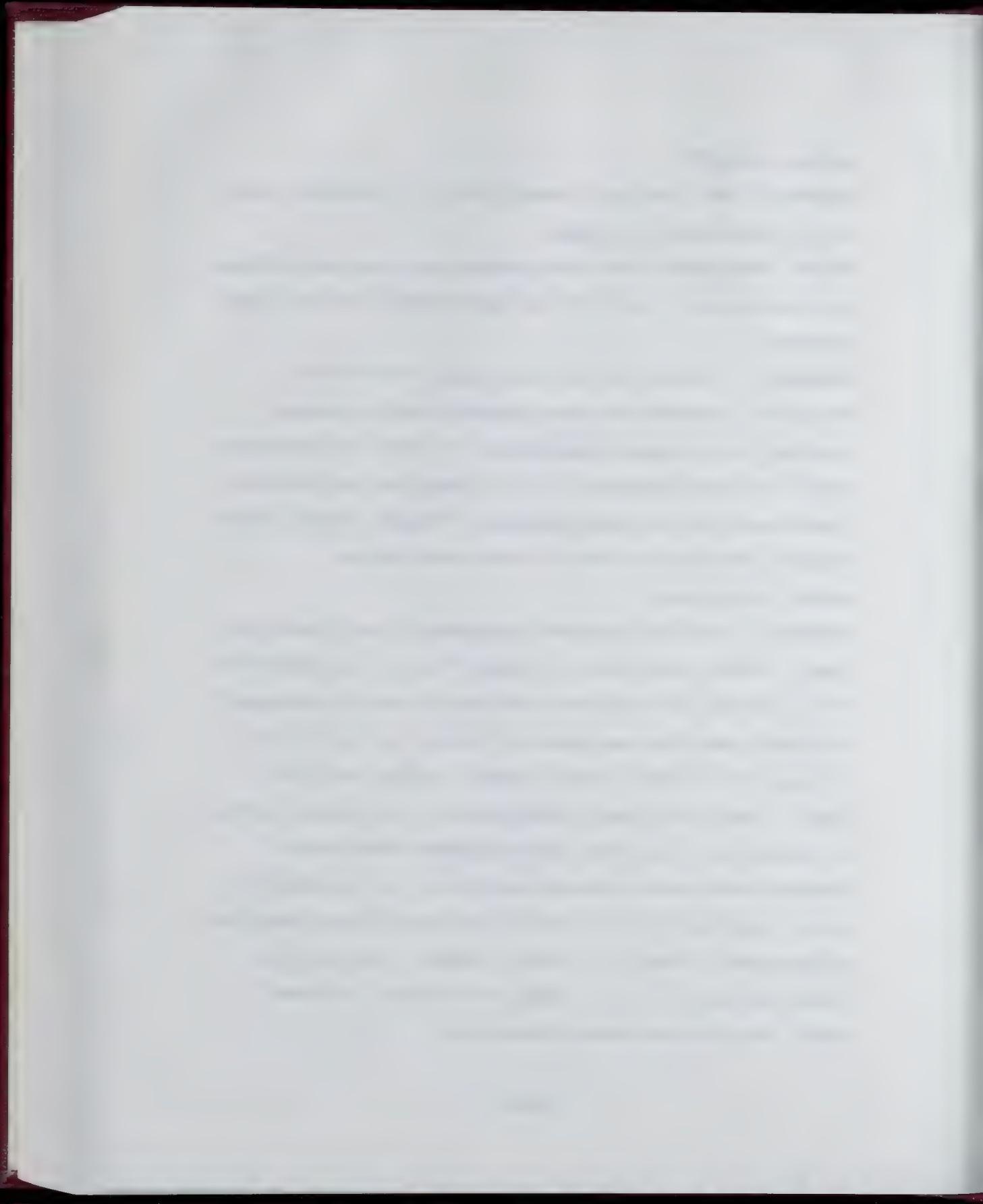
HERRMANN: No. And so it started in '72. And that's how I got to [translate] the Essai.

SMITH: What about your relationship with the Getty [Center for the History of Art and the Humanities]? How did that develop?

HERRMANN: I think, in the first place, that Harry Mallgrave approached me about helping him with Semper. I've got the correspondence there. I could tie that down; that's not that important. And he came here and saw all these books, and he must have said, "Why are there little blue--?" There's one with a little blue circle.

SMITH: Oh, right.

HERRMANN: Most of them have disappeared. But there are some. And he said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I promised the GTA [Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur] in Zürich that they can have my library, or part of the library, when I die, when I'm dead. And he said, "Oh, fine." They had a small hand library. And trying to help my executors, I put blue spots on those books which I thought would be of interest to Zürich. So he asked me that. And then he said, "Well, the whole library would be of interest to Getty." I said, "Maybe." And the next thing was that-- I can't think of his name. He came here. He's at the Getty library now.



SMITH: Mel Edelstein? Was it the librarian or the archivist?

HERRMANN: No. The library, I think Edelstein.

SMITH: Mel Edelstein.

HERRMANN: He came here and we talked about it, and he was-- Yes, it interests him. I don't know. He may have been a bit vague. But he then suggested, "Oh, you must come to the Getty." And there I must also have already suggested that they can have my archive. That's how it developed. And this, eventually, didn't-- This part, I wanted. The archive I gave to Getty. I just donated it to Getty. But this, if they wanted to have the library, I wanted to sell it. And I think we also-- Then, when I was in L.A., we talked about the price. That was more than they wanted to spend, and nothing came of it. And I'm quite happy that it didn't materialize.

SMITH: So it's currently going to go to--

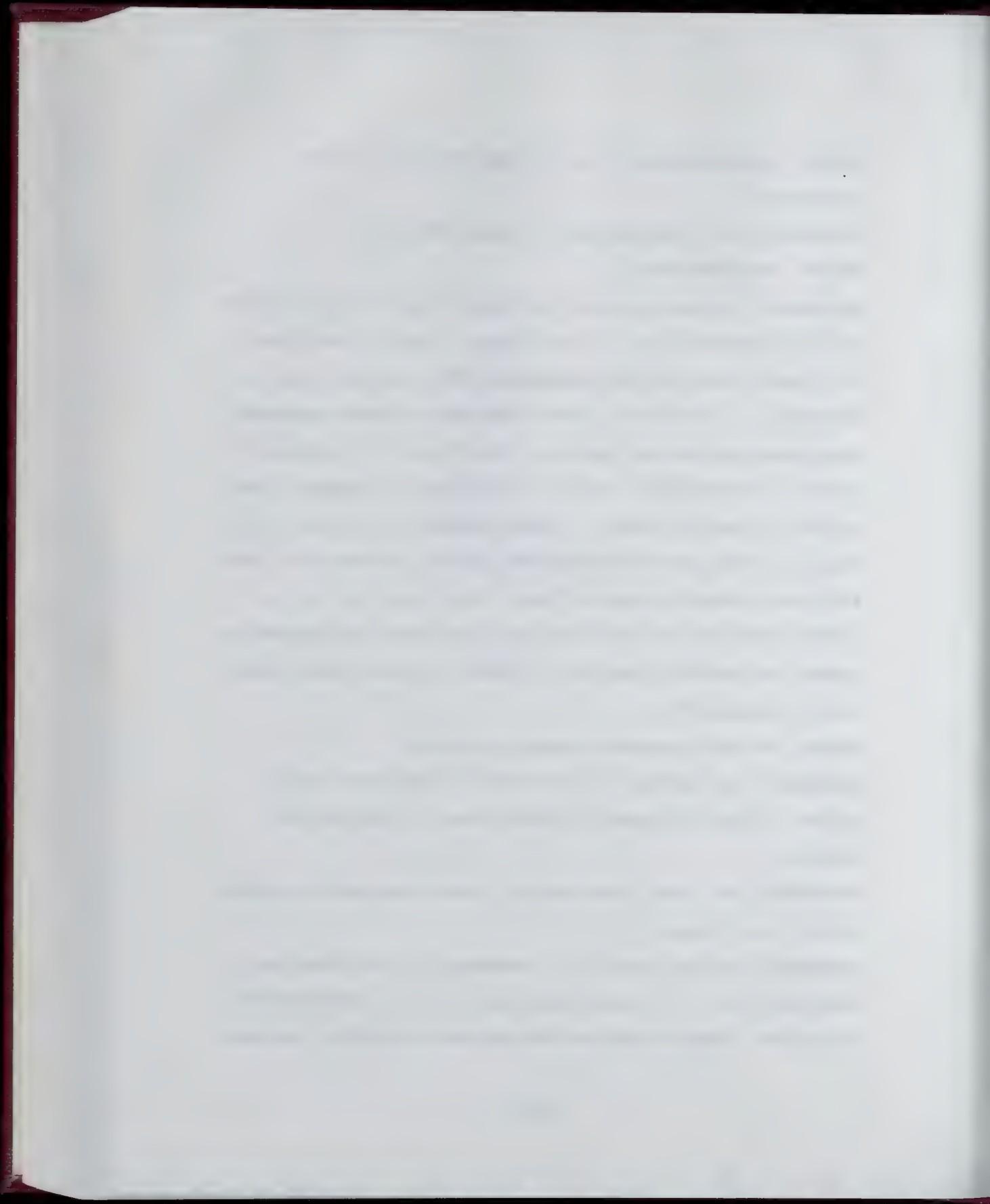
HERRMANN: My children can do with it what they want.

SMITH: So is it currently going to go to the GTA in Zürich?

HERRMANN: No. No. The people I knew then have all left.

SMITH: Oh, I see.

HERRMANN: And so that-- No. Nothing. My children can deal with it. If I would have sold it at a considerable price now, I would have had to pay quite a bit of tax and



so on. But anyhow--

SMITH: I wanted to wind this up by asking you a couple of general questions. One was your impressions of Jakob Burkhardt's work as a model for historians.

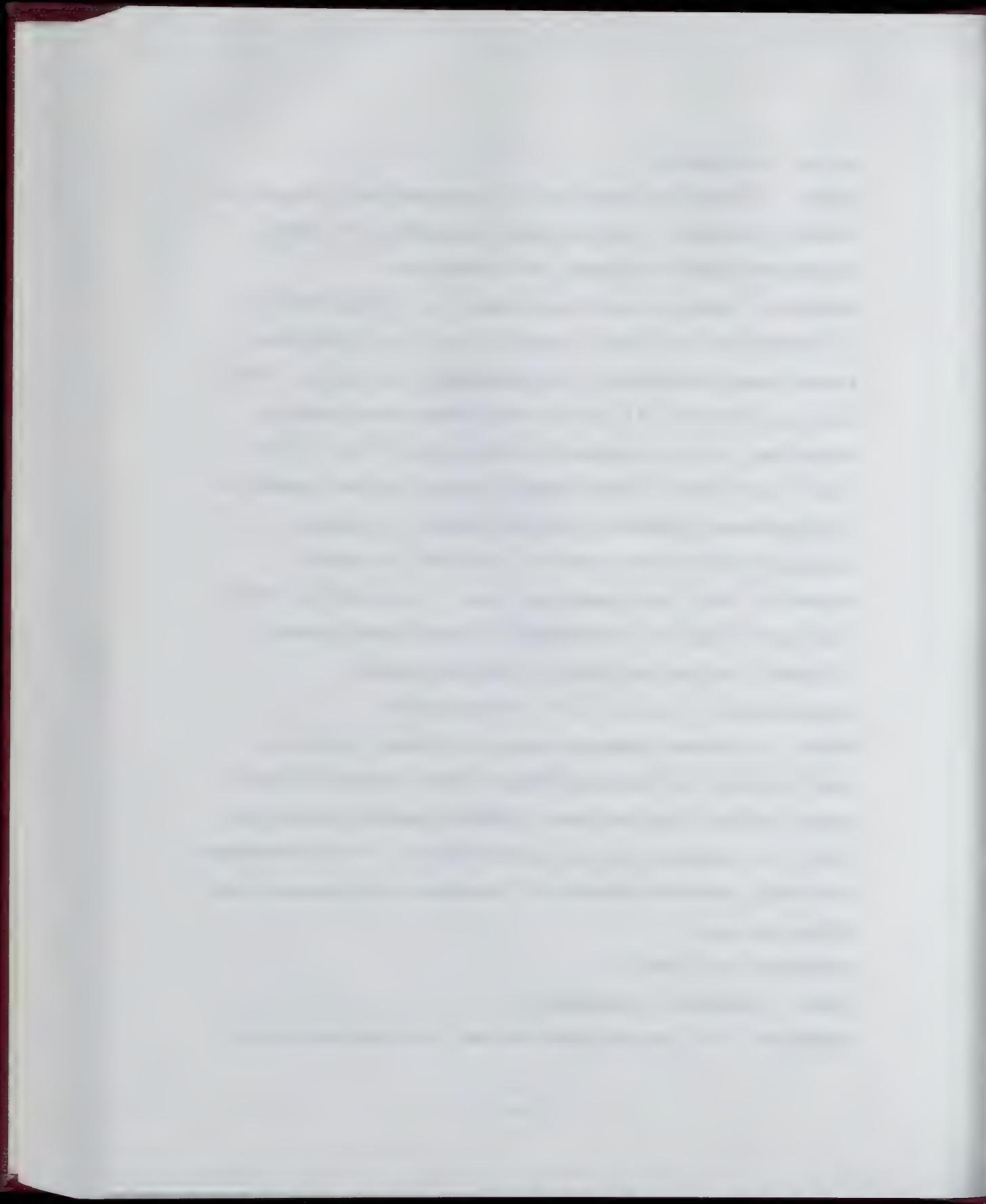
HERRMANN: Yeah, he must have been-- As a young man, it interested me, but then I moved on to a time which was beyond Jakob Burkhardt. That was when I was young. When I was old, like now, it is the Renaissance that doesn't affect me. It's an evaluation of a period that at the time, about which I just recently wrote [second quarter of the nineteenth century], was criticized. So Jakob Burkhardt didn't enter into it, but that is quite recently. But, as a young man, yes, I studied him. But then moved away to a time which he would have almost rejected. He did not like nineteenth-century neoclassicism, a period just preceding him.

SMITH: I've been thinking about your Greek studies and your interest in classical Greece, and I wanted to talk about that a little bit more, because ancient Greece has had a very special role in German culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, thinking of Winckelmann and Hölderlin and--

HERRMANN: No. Well--

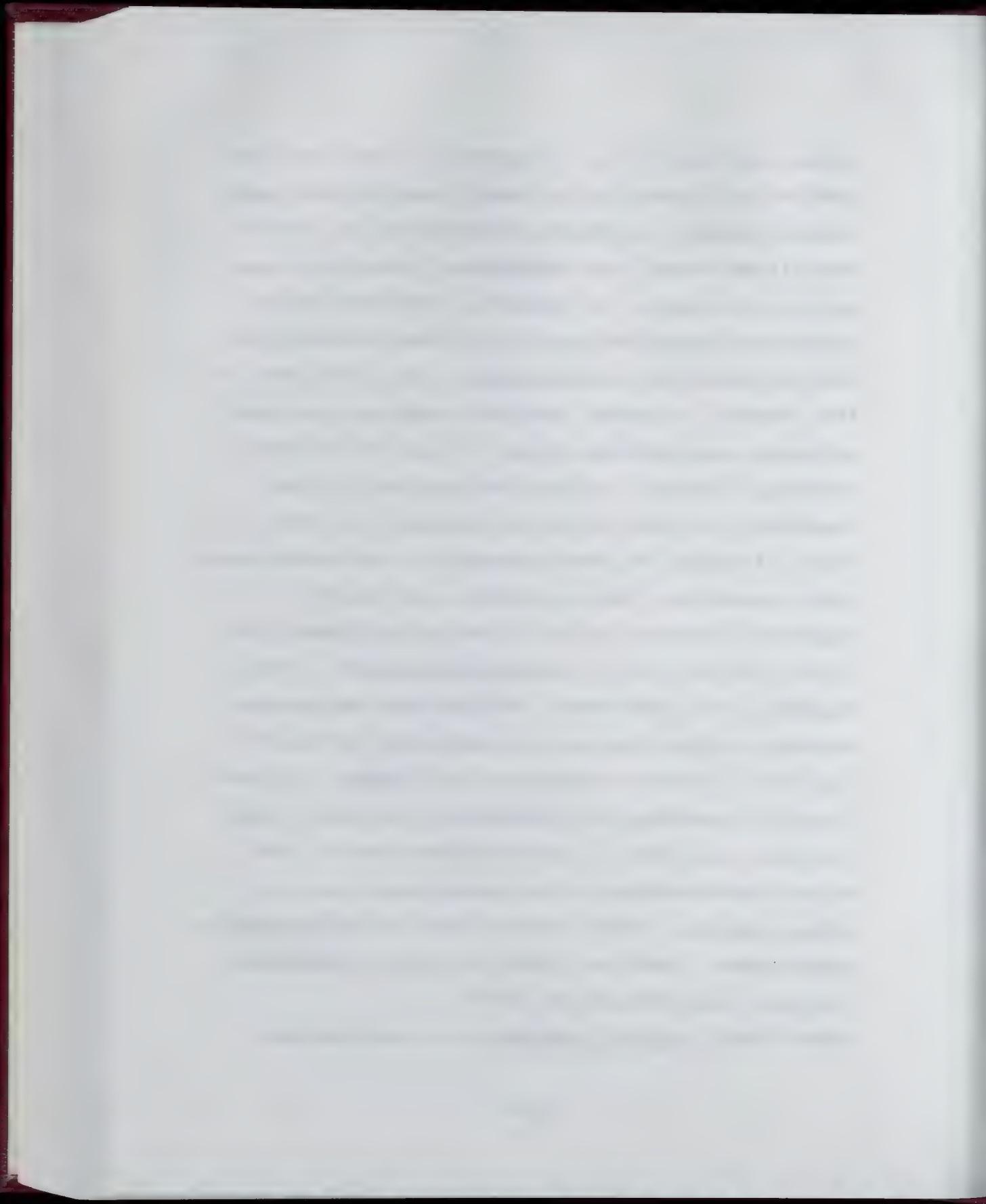
SMITH: Heidegger, certainly.

HERRMANN: No. Not so much with me, but much more, for



instance, with Anni. She is typical of a time, beginning when she was a young girl at school, where we were taught Greek mythology. And she was fascinated by it. I don't think it was unique, this fascination. Probably she was one of a few people. But generally, there must be more young German people who grew up with Greek mythology and were conversant with Greek mythology. So I think Anni, in that respect, is typical, that all through her life Greek mythology meant something to her. I also learned Greek mythology in school. And when the time came, at the beginning of the war, having just returned from Greece-- There, of course, the Greek mythology for Anni became alive and interested me. When we returned, and then the beginning of the war, we sat at home in the blackout and couldn't go out, and life outside really ceased. Then we decided to read Greek books. And that grew and grew and probably, at that time, was a surrogate for me for what I lost when I decided to finish with art history. But there I could do something with methodology. But Greek-- Well, the very famous book-- I think Anni has it still. Any child of the beginning of the century, when I went to school, and she, between 1910 and 1920, read Heldensagen by Gustav Schalk. That was a book like Alice in Wonderland. You have-- What have you got here?

SMITH: Well, Bulfinch's Mythology is a book that most



American and British children would be introduced to.

HERRMANN: Well, everybody, as a child, read Heldensagen.

Some people were caught by it.

SMITH: I wonder if you could summarize your basic interpretations of the meaning of ancient Greek society and culture. What did it come to mean for you, these studies? What was revealed to you?

HERRMANN: No, I don't think it helped me. Of course, when I-- Mainly, probably, when I worked on Semper and the time before Semper, or even on Laugier, and Greece and Greek architecture was an important issue. Then it helped me that I was conversant with what people around 1820 or 1800 thought. Or Winckelmann. I was conversant with the literature as much as they were. Of course, it helped.

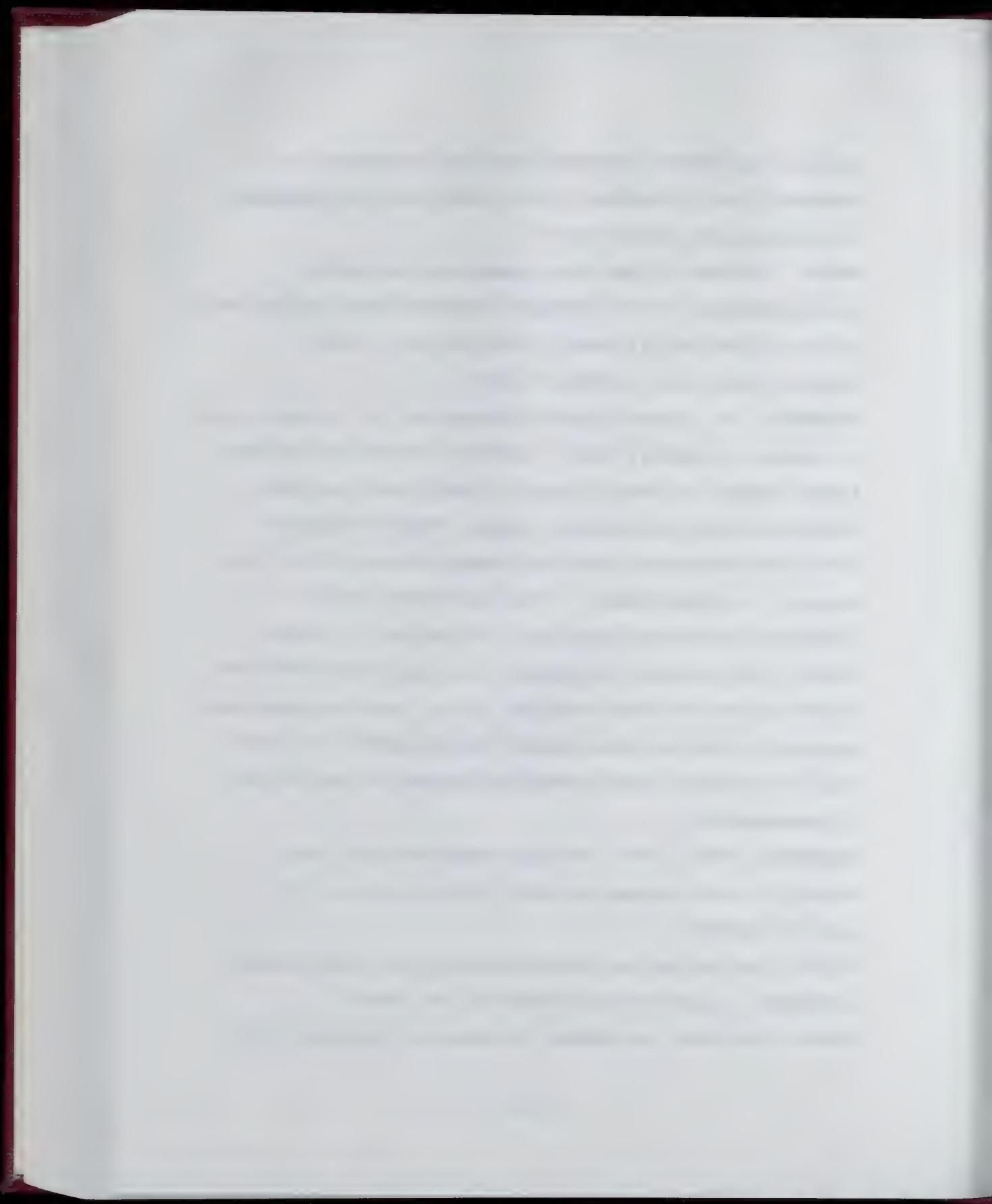
SMITH: For instance, Aby Warburg also was fascinated with Greek culture and often referred to it. And the thing that appealed to him was this balance between order and chaos that the ancient Greeks seemed to capture for him in his interpretation.

HERRMANN: Yeah. But I was not really aware of Aby Warburg's whole conception until later, probably until I came to England.

SMITH: But during your studies in the forties of Greece--

HERRMANN: I wasn't really aware of his ideas.

SMITH: And then, of course, the idea of the symbol. Did

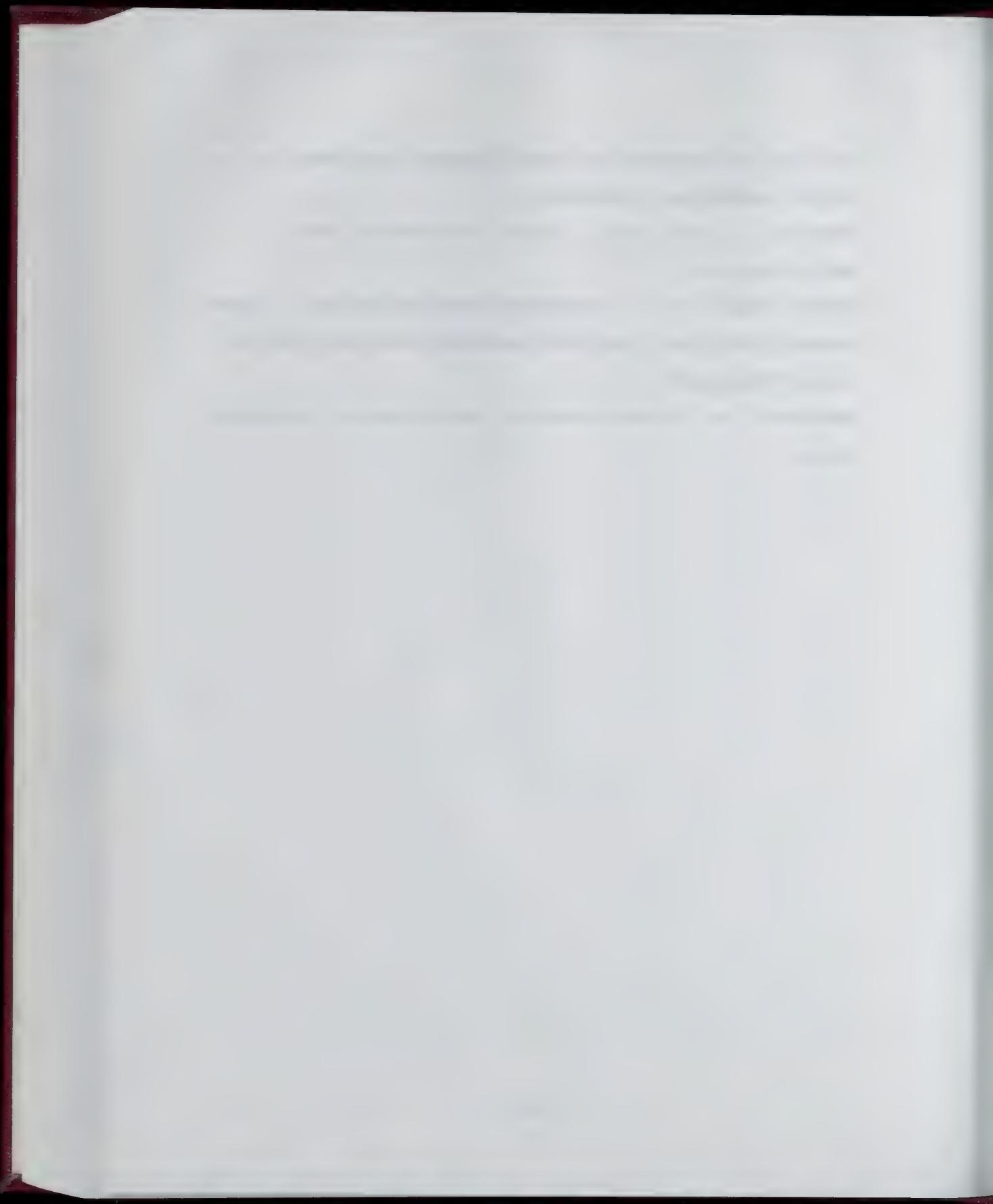


the study of Greek culture help formulate your ideas on the role of symbolism? The symbol?

HERRMANN: I don't know. It may. Not really. No. I don't think so.

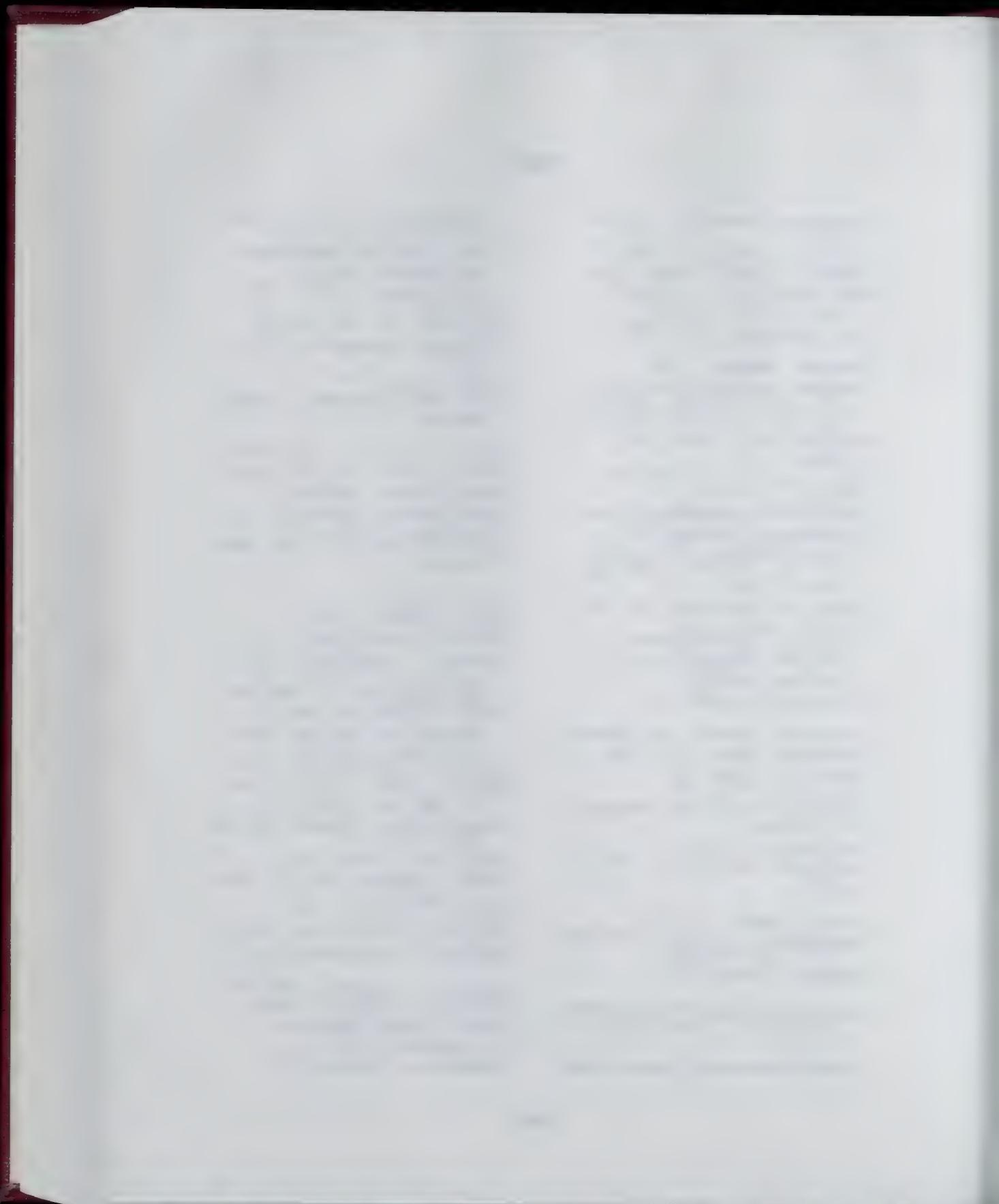
SMITH: Okay. Well, I think we've come to the end. I just wanted to ask you if you have anything else you'd like to add to this record.

HERRMANN: No. I don't know what you'll make of the whole thing.

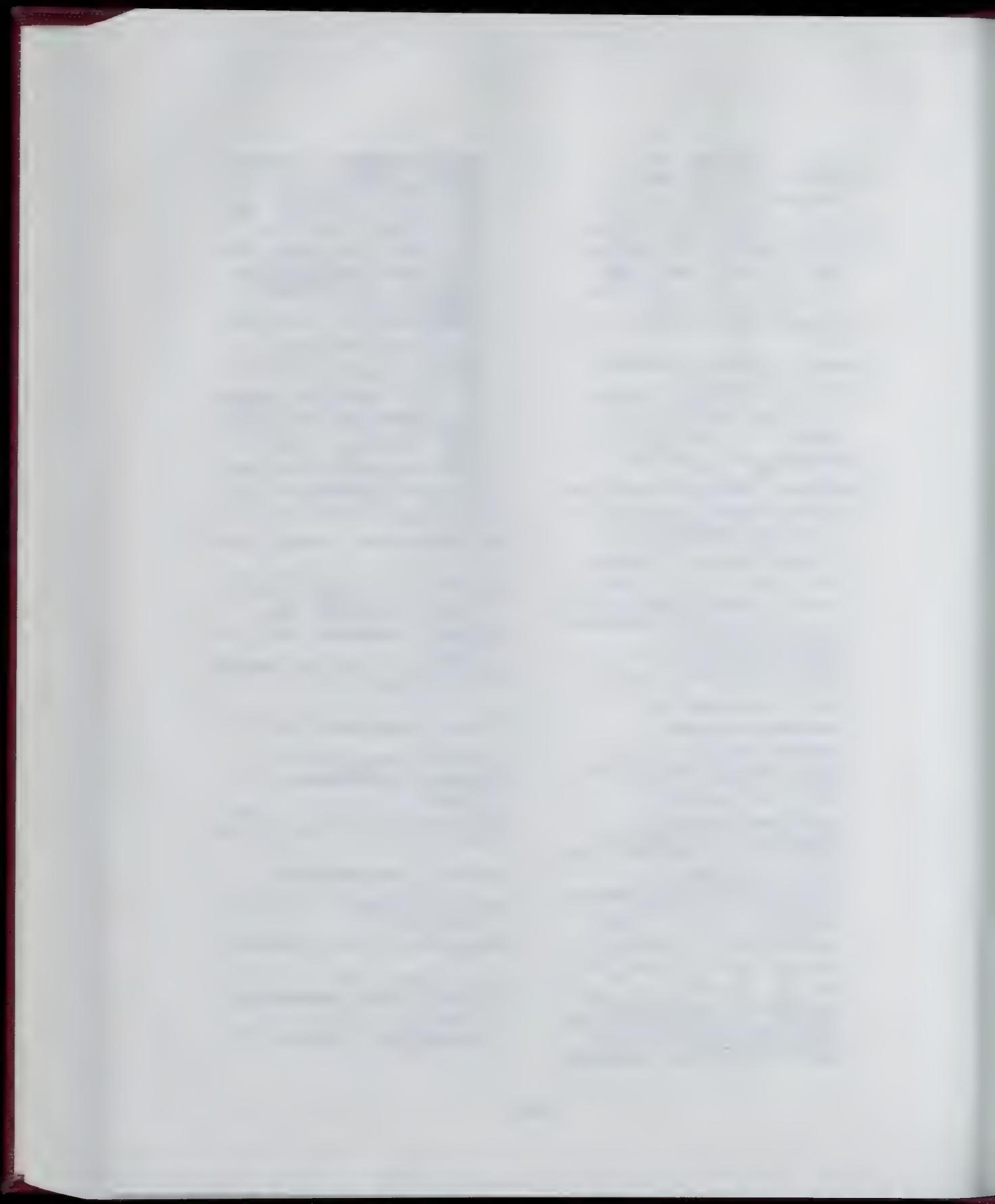


## INDEX

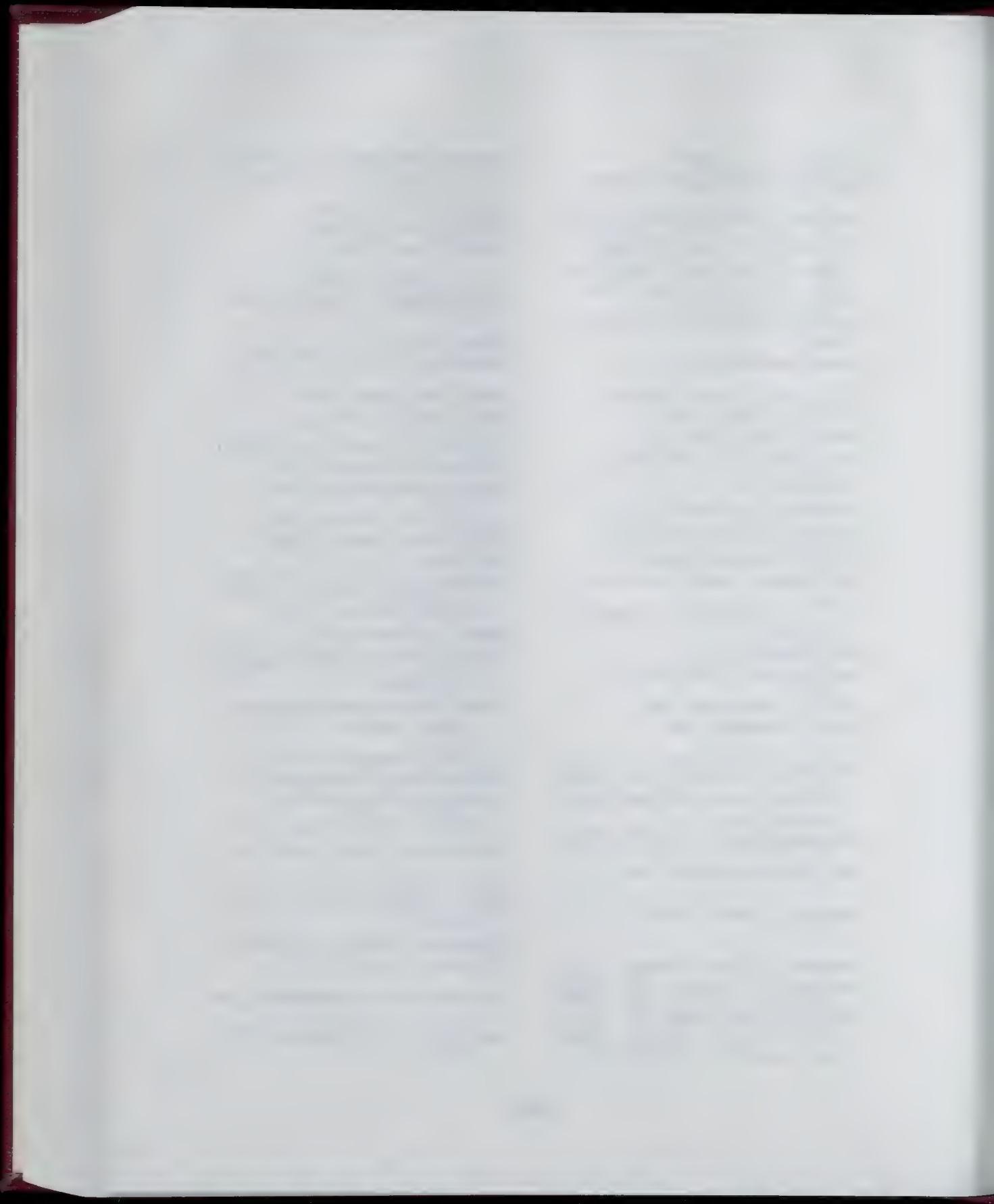
- Ackerman, James S., 167-68, 184  
Albers, Annie, 85, 108  
Albers, Josef, 84-85, 108  
Anti-Semitism, 3, 44-47, 72, 127-29, 149-50  
Art Bulletin, 167, 184  
  
Banham, Reyner, 185  
Baroque architecture, 28-29, 32-37, 41-42, 50-53, 56, 62-64, 66-67, 69, 71  
Bauhaus, 80, 84-85, 99, 108-9, 111  
Benn, Gottfried, 136-37  
Berlin, 3, 6-9  
Berühmte Kunststätte, 106-7  
Birkhäuser Verlag, 214  
Blunt, Anthony, 163, 165, 171-76, 190-91, 200-201, 204-6, 224  
Bode, Wilhelm von, 78, 82  
Bonatz, Paul, 104  
Britain: architecture, 141-45; reception of exiles, 148-51  
Burkhardt, Jakob, 244  
  
Cassirer, Ernst, 33, 68-69  
Cassirer, Kurt, 33, 232  
Cohn, William, 78  
Cold War, 173, 175  
Communist Party of Germany, 4, 88-89  
Corbusier, 118-19  
Cordemoy, Géraud de, 165, 196  
  
Dehio, Georg, 70-71  
Desgodets, Antoine, 166-67, 169, 184, 217-18  
Driesch, Hans, 57  
  
Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule (ETH) Berlin, 21-22  
Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule (ETH) Zürich, 203-4, 208-9, 213-14;  
Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur (GTA), 208, 242-43  
Escorial, 32, 35, 66-67  
Ettlinger, Leopold, 135, 163  
Evans, Joan, 164  
Exile and refugees, 130-38, 148-51  
  
Falke, Otto von, 65, 77-78  
Frankl, Paul, 37, 39, 69-70  
Freud, Ernst, 236-37  
Friedländer, Walter F., 23  
Frischauer, Paul, 137  
Fröhlich, Martin, 204, 208, 238-40  
  
Gall, Ernst, 79, 127  
Gehry, Frank, 116-17  
George, Stefan, 84  
Germany: inflation, 54-55; revolution, 18-19, 21.  
See also Berlin; Nazism  
Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanites, 242-43  
Giedion, Siegfried, 123  
Glaser, Kurt, 64, 66, 74-78, 82, 85, 109, 116  
Goldschmidt, Adolph, 25-28, 30-31, 47, 60  
Gombrich, Ernst, 163  
Greek studies, 154-57, 160-61, 244-47  
Gropius, Martin, 78  
Gropius, Walter, 98, 108  
Gurlitt, Cornelius, 51, 97  
  
Hansen, Theophil, 157-58  
Hautecœur, Louis, 190  
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 231  
Hegelmann, Werner, 107



- Hempel, Eberhard, 29  
 Herrmann, Anna Kirstein (mother), 1-2, 9-10, 12, 19, 31, 44-45, 131-32  
 Herrmann, Anni Marx (wife), 42-43, 45-47, 79, 82-83, 108, 131-32, 139, 152, 154, 161, 189, 208, 232-33, 236, 241, 245  
 Herrmann, Frank (son), 112-15  
 Herrmann, Klaus (brother), 4, 83, 114, 139  
 Herrmann, Richard (father), 1-2, 7-8, 10-15, 19, 31, 44-45, 56, 68, 132-33  
 Herrmann, Ruth (sister), 4-6, 88-89, 174  
 Herrmann, Wolfgang--work in architectural history: "Antoine Desgodets and the Académie Royale d'Architecture," 166-67, 169, 184, 217-18; Berlin study (unpublished), 106-8, 128; Deutsche Baukunst des XIX und XX Jahrhunderts, 35-36, 64, 81-82, 85, 89-107, 120, 123-28, 166, 180, 190, 207; "Deutsche und Oesterreichische Raumgestaltung," 36; Gottfried Semper im Exil, 203-4, 207-10, 212-13, 216, 218, 226-28; Gottfried Semper in Search of Architecture, 213-14, 216, 226-28, 240; Gottfried Semper: Theoretischer Nachlass an der ETH, 210, 212-13, 216, 218, 226, 238-41; "Der Hochbarocke Klosterotyp," 28-29, 32-37, 41-42, 50-53, 56, 64, 66-67, 69, 71; In What Style Should We Build?: The German Debate on Architectural Style, 96, 211-12, 216; Laugier and Eighteenth Century French Theory, 142, 145, 155, 157-58, 163-67, 170-71, 176-77, 181-83, 186-91, 193-99, 201, 205, 214, 216, 223, 228, 230, 235, 246; Marc-Antoine Laugier: An Essay on Architecture (translation), 189, 241-42; "The Problem of Chronology in Ledoux's Engraved Designs," 177-79, 181, 184; The Theory of Claude Perrault, 185, 200-204, 206-7, 214, 216, 228; "Zur Bau- und Künstlergeschichte von Kloster Weingarten," 37, 62-63; other, 162, 181, 203, 218  
 Hilbersheimer, Ludwig, 115-16  
 Hildebrandt, Hans, 27-28  
 Historical method, 217-24, 226-29, 231-32, 244  
 Hübsch, Heinrich, 180, 216, 230-31  
 Humboldt University Berlin, 25-28, 60  
 Itten, Johannes, 111-12  
 Jantzen, Hans, 23-25  
 Jedermanns Bücherei, 91, 128-29  
 Judaism, 3-4, 43-47, 149  
 Jugendstil, 11, 101-3, 121  
 Kaden, Ilse Herrmann (sister), 4, 9-11, 84  
 Kaufmann, Emil, 165, 171, 179, 181  
 Kirstein, Arthur (uncle), 111  
 Koch, Karl, 76  
 Koppel, Suse (sister-in-law), 114  
 Krautheimer, Richard, 69-71, 163



- Krier, Leon, 186  
Kunst und Künstler, 108-11  
 Laugier, Marc-Antoine, 142, 145, 155, 157-58, 163-67, 170-71, 176-77, 181-83, 186-91, 193-99, 201, 205, 214, 215, 223, 228, 230, 235, 241-42, 246  
 Ledoux, C.N., 177-79, 181, 184  
 Loos, Adolph, 103  
 Mallgrave, Harry Francis, 210-12, 230, 242  
 Mann, Albert, 180  
 Marx, Adolf (father-in-law), 83, 88, 111, 130, 150, 237  
 Matthaei, Adalbert, 97  
 Meier, Burkhard, 128-29  
 Mendelsohn, Erich, 101-2  
 Meyer, Hannes, 108-9, 117  
 Middleton, Robin, 165-66, 190  
 Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 115-17  
 MIT Press, 214  
 Moholy-Nagy, László, 81, 115  
 Morris, William, 145  
 Moser, Werner, 105  
 Nazism, 3, 18, 46-47, 59-61, 76, 127-31, 139, 225, 233-34; and architecture, 120-21, 186  
 Neoclassicism, 157-58, 181-82, 189-90, 194-96  
 Neue Sachlichkeit, 88  
 Osborn, Franz (cousin), 134-35  
 Patzsch, Albert Renger, 81  
 Perrault, Claude, 185, 200-204, 206-7, 214, 215, 228  
 Pevsner, Nikolaus, 8, 30, 63, 100-101, 125-26, 162-63, 168-70, 178-79, 191  
 Pinder, Wilhelm, 2-3, 29-30, 37-39, 51, 53-54, 56-60, 71-74  
 Poelzig, Hans, 102  
 Pönsgen, Georg, 79  
 Putzel, Eva, 136  
 Reiche, Peter, 136  
 Reidemeister, Leopold, 78-79  
 Rose, Hans, 29  
 Rosenau, Helen, 179, 181  
 Sauerland, Max, 2-3  
 Saxl, Fritz, 163  
 Scanol, 138  
 Scheffler, Karl, 64, 109-10  
 Schmarsow, August, 40  
 Schulze-Naumburg, Paul, 119-20  
 Schumacher, Fritz, 123  
 Schwitters, Kurt, 108  
 Sedlmayr, Hans, 123  
 Semper, Gottfried, 94, 121, 145, 203-4, 207-16, 218, 226-30, 237-42, 246  
 Speer, Albert, 186  
 Staatliche Kunstabibliothek Berlin, 63-64, 66, 73-82, 85, 129-30  
 Staatliches Kunstmuseum Berlin, 65-66, 73-75, 77  
 Steiner, Rudolf, 102  
 Studniczka, Franz, 56-57  
 Stuttgart Weissenhof-siedlung, 104  
 Sullivan, Louis, 119  
 Summerson, John, 145, 216  
 Taut, Bruno, 110, 116  
 Taut, Max, 99, 102, 110, 115-16  
 Tessenow, Heinrich, 118  
 Tietze, Hans, 40  
 University of Freiburg, 22-25  
 University of Leipzig, 30, 54-57



University of Munich, 25,  
29, 46, 48, 54-55  
University of Würzburg, 30  
Unwin, Raymond, 143

Velde, Henry van de, 97-98  
Vogt, Adolf Max, 208, 213

Waetzoldt, Wilhelm, 64, 82,  
89, 92-93, 126-27, 130,  
235-36

Wagner, Otto, 101, 124  
Wagner-Rieger, Renate, 238  
Warburg, Aby, 54, 147  
Warburg Institute, 54, 133,  
135, 150, 163  
Watkin, David, 177-79, 181-  
82

Weinberger, Barbara  
Herrmann (daughter), 112-  
14

Weinberger, Harry (son-in-  
law), 113-14

Weinberger, Joanna (grand-  
daughter), 113

Whiffen, Marcus, 241  
Winckelmann, Johann, 155  
Wind, Edgar, 151  
Wittkower, Margot, 135,  
168, 233

Wittkower, Rudolf, 28, 53-  
54, 133-35, 150-51, 161-  
63, 165, 167-73, 176,  
184-85, 190-91, 204, 214,  
232-35

Wolf, Conrad, 174-75  
Wolf, Friedrich, 4-5  
Wolf, Markus, 174-75  
Wölfflin, Heinrich, 25-26,  
29-31, 34, 38-40, 47-53,  
56, 219-20

World War I, 12-13, 15-21  
World War II, 152-54

Zweig, Stefan, 84, 136  
Zwemmer, Desmond, 171, 190-  
92, 213-14

6x229











